

Thomas Top Qualifier Is JUN 27 1976 *B. J. Murphy* For U.S. Gymnastics Team

UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa. (UPI) — Indiana State senior Kurt Thomas took top honors and former Penn State star Marshall Avenier staged a brilliant comeback to make the team Saturday night in the U.S. Men's Olympic gymnastics final team trials.

Thomas, 20, had a meet-high 9.8 on the sidehorse for his opening routine and followed it with a 9.4 on floor exercise, 9.4 on vaulting, 9.45 on rings, 9.7 on high bar and 9.15 on parallel bars. Ten is perfect.

"The 9.8 to start off sure helped. I was clean and I did just what I wanted," Thomas grinned after topping the 13 competitors vying for the six-man squad before 5,200 spectators in Penn State's Rec Hall.

Avenier, at 25 the oldest gymnast in the field, was in seventh place going into the finals "because I was nervous Friday." But he was calm Saturday and "used my experience to reorganize myself."

Avenier vaulted in the standings over former Penn Stater Gene Whelan, who wound up sixth, and Peter Kormann of Southern Connecticut.

Kormann was dumped to the alternate's spot when two serious mistakes on his final event, the high bar, stuck him with a meet low score of 7.75.

Others making the squad included Penn State graduate student Wayne Young, the top scorer for Saturday's events, Tom Beach of Albany, Calif., and Illinois high school star Bart Conner.

Final cumulative totals from last month's semifinal trials and the finals, which included 18 routines, were: 1. Thomas 226.05; 2. Young 225.80; 3. Beach 223.60; 4. Conner 222.90; 5. Avenier 222.45; 6. Gene Whelan 221.65; 7. (alternate) Kormann 221.45.

The United States is sending six young gymnasts of near-equal ability to Montreal in a serious effort to win its first men's gymnastics medal in 44 years.

"They're not going to beat the Japanese or the Russians, but it's possible they could pull third, particularly because for the first time the crowd will be partisan to the Americans," said two-time U.S. Olympian Armando Vega.

Vega, a former Olympic judge who once coached the Mexican national team, described the U.S. squad, tapped from the final two-day trials which opened Friday at Penn State's Rec Hall, as "no superstars, but very consistent."

Team manager Gene Wettstone, 1948 and 1952 U.S. coach, said, "I think the gymnasts proved to those who were here why we're all saying this team has a very real shot at the bronze medal at the games next month."

Going into Saturday night's optional portion of the final trials, the top six had averaged nearly 9.2 out of 10.0 for each of the 18 routines performed in the semi-final trials last month at Berkeley, Calif. and Friday night here.

Less than 3 points separated the bunch, each of whom had scored consistently higher overall than any other men's team ever fielded by the United States in an Olympic year.

"It used to be our team would have one or two older, internationally experienced

gymnasts with a 'name' and the scores dropped off drastically after that," said Vega, now coach at Louisiana State.

Despite the youth of this team, ranging in age from 18 to 24, all have competed before international judges, most as members of last fall's gold medal-winning Pan American Games squad.

"We have improved so much that our sixth man should do better in Montreal than our number one man did two years ago in the World Games," said U.S. Coach Karl Schwenzfeier.

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Community Affairs

Many persons consider themselves fortunate if they make one trip of any length at all in a year's time.

Some persons, in fact, most persons, have never been to a foreign country unless they served in the military and were shipped overseas during their stint.

In the past year or so, Kurt Thomas, Indiana State's premier gymnast, has been to Spain, to Canada a couple times (including the Olympics last fall), West Germany, Mexico City and, most recently, Romania. Later this year, he more than likely will be making a trip to Bulgaria for the World University Games.

"The U.S. Gymnastics Federation meet is my next meet. The World University team will be picked then," Thomas said before a workout Friday in the ISU Arena. (Gymnasts work out the year around.)

This summer, he said, he will go to some gymnastics camps around the country. Then, this fall, he probably will be making some more international meets, while 'red shirting' at ISU to extend his eligibility through the 1978-79 season when he will seek his second all-around title in the NCAA.

This year, for the first time since 1967, the team winner and all-around champ came from the same school as Thomas led the field in Arizona individually and ISU shared team honors with Oklahoma with a dramatic rally in the final two events of the NCAA.

Last week, Thomas, accompanied by Coach Roger Council, was in Romania for a propaganda show staged by the host team. All was set for a showcase event for the Europeans but Thomas spoiled part of the fun.

He "snuck up on them" and won the all-around title, defeating Romanian ace Dan Greco who seldom loses, particularly at home. In the individual finals, then, the officials were waiting for the American upstart but Thomas still won parallel bars and shared honors in floor exercise.

Coach Council says his gymnast had side horse taken away from him. "I was deducted pretty much for a minor break," Thomas recalled.

"I have seen politics in gymnastics and seen some pretty ridiculous judging but I never saw anything like it in Romania. Officials talked to the judges during the meet. They discussed my routines with the judges," he said.

The meet, while rigged for the Romanians, probably served Thomas well in terms of international gymnastics, where politics is played heavily. "They'll know my name now when I go to the gym. I won't just be 'that American sent for the meet' and that's important to me," Thomas said.

In the Olympics, American men and women both said their gymnasts received lower scores than they should have because the judges were mostly from the European countries. Japan, of course, has been the leader in men's gymnastics until the rise of Russia in all sports.

Last week's meet, Thomas said, was not as much of a "vacation type thing" as some of his trips have been. "One thing, we had to get used to the difference in time and days," he said.

While Thomas won men's all-around, Romanian Nadia Comaneci was the winner in the women's. "She was something else. She was even better than she was in the Olympics," Thomas said.

He said all the Romanian athletes had an austere way about them and he didn't try to approach Nadia or some of the others. He said they were around them on the bus and in the gym but the Romanian team stayed in a different hotel than the rest of the teams.

Eleven countries, in all, were represented in the meet but Romania had far more entries than any of the rest. Kurt was the only American man in the



KURT THOMAS
World Traveling Gymnast

meet and one American girl competed.

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Kurt Thomas: best gymnast in the world?

Community Affairs File

ISU gymnast gives new image to men's sport

Sn OCT 14 1978

By Neil Amdur

It can happen anywhere, anytime. Kurt Thomas suddenly will decide to stretch his legs, even while driving a car. One foot will go to the roof while the other foot remains on the gas pedal.

Or Thomas will dazzle his wife's sorority sisters at Indiana State University in Terre Haute by turning on a television set with a forward roll and then slipping backward into his seat.

The other night, at a movie theater in Colorado Springs, Beth Thomas was returning to her seat with a box of popcorn. Instead of standing or shuffling his feet to let his wife pass, Thomas simply lifted his legs to his nose.

"The people seated behind us couldn't believe it," Beth recalled with a chuckle last night. "We were watching 'Damien Omen 2', and I guess they must have wondered about Kurt. I said, 'Don't worry, he's a gymnast.'"

No. 1 in U.S.

Not just a gymnast, but the world's most talked about gymnast and No. 1 in the United States the last three years. In the next six months, the 22-year-old Thomas may wind up as the world's No. 1.

Recently, performing a series of exhibitions during the men's finals at the National Sports Festival, the 5-foot-5-inch Thomas was mobbed by youthful autograph seekers. "Please, Kurt. Just one more, Kurt. Over here. Hey, Kurt. That one's mine."

Later, over a steak dinner with his wife and his former high school coach, Don Gutzler, Thomas sipped a beer and reflected on how and why he has become the Shaun Cassidy of the sport.

It is more than his irrepressible size or youthful exuberance that makes him look 22 going on 15. When Thomas dramatically snaps his leg up on a handstand, flicks out his hands during a turn on the horizontal bar or flares his legs, in a series of whirling midair leg-scissors that now bear his name, he is consciously showing off.

"I've started to gear myself more toward the crowd than the judges because of the impact the crowd has on the judges," he said. "People want to see a show. You can't yell or scream at a gymnastics meet. At the Indianapolis 500, they wait for a car to crash so they can get involved. At gymnastics, I think the crowds want to get involved. I like to get involved."

Does he ever. Thomas turned Madison Square Garden upside down with excitement last March while sweeping the American Cup men's competition over some of the world's top gymnasts. His new floor-exercise program for the World Games later this year will open with his first two passes

running together instead of the traditional tumble, tumble, stop. For the 1980 Moscow Olympics, he has begun working on a triple backward dismount with a full twist off the horizontal bars that no one has completed and that even his wife admits "makes me nervous."

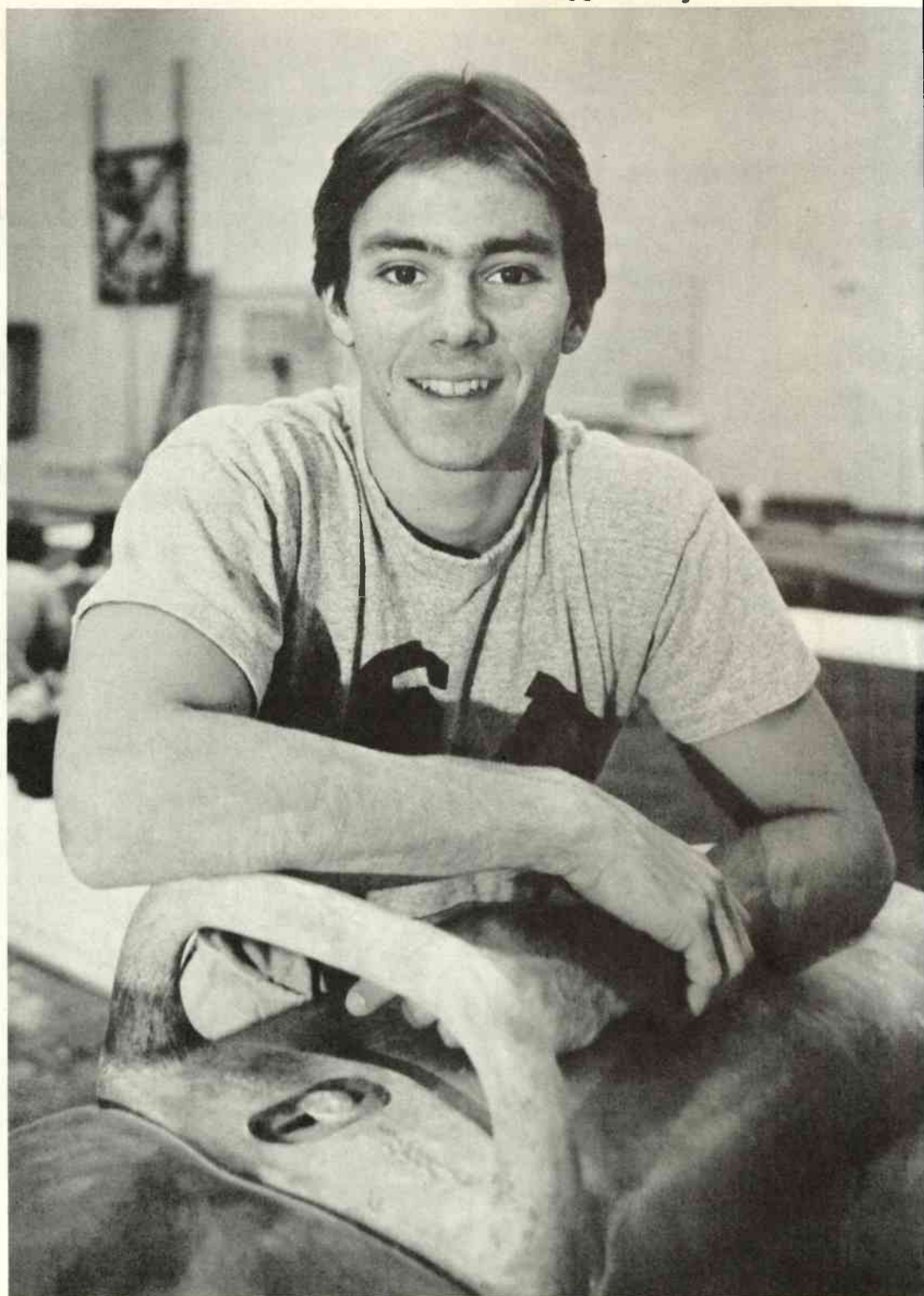
"He's doing so many more original moves now," said Gutzler, who first spotted Thomas wearing oversized Army-Navy store shorts and asking for a tryout as a freshman at Miami Central High School. "I'm amazed every time I see the progress he's made."

"I really don't feel I'm the best, I'm not there yet," Thomas said. Perhaps, but he has maneuvered close to the top by defying almost every traditional pattern in the sport.

A 'Late' Start at 14

Thomas did not take up gymnastics until the age of 14, late considering that Craig Riegel, a 13-year-old from Reading, Pa., won a gold medal in the floor exercise during the festival last night.

Stylistically, Thomas lacks the technical precision of Bart Connor, the National Col-



Kurt Thomas

Photo by American Visuals

legiate champion. But if Thomas is more Olga Korbut than Nadia Comaneci, his short legs and long arms are well constructed for a gymnast.

Then there was his marriage last New Year's Eve, after Beth had changed the date six times because of hectic travel commitments. New Year's Eve was the only time, Beth reasoned, that there would be no meet.

"Before we were married," she said, "some people tried to talk Kurt out of it. They thought he would fall on his face because other gymnasts had gotten married in the past and had flopped or gotten divorced. It was a very difficult time for us. I felt a lot of people were against me."

The American Cup was the Thomases personal and competitive honeymoon. The six gold medals were Kurt's wedding present to his wife, his way of letting skeptics know how he felt. "I really wanted to prove to people that the marriage wasn't any different, that if anything, it was a help," he said.

By 1980, Beth and Kurt Thomas may replace Chrystie and Bruce Jenner as America's gold-medal couple. Kurt always looks toward his wife before he begins every routine, a form of relaxation. Raised on a farm in Rushville, Ind., Beth assists her husband in coaching clinics and summer camps, types his college papers (both are students at Indiana State), sorts out his abundance of fan mail and works in the intramural office to help pay the rent on an \$8,000 trailer they recently purchased.

"A lot of people think Kurt's cocky, but he's basically shy," Beth said. "He hates to give interviews before crowds. (Beth, tell me what to say.) He's afraid he's going to say the wrong thing or hurt gymnastics."

On the floor, however, Thomas is so aggressive that one of his problems is facing

his weaknesses. "I need someone to tell me what my weaknesses are," he says.

One of Thomas's weaknesses in the past was setting dates and goals for himself. In a sport as subjective as gymnastics, rationalizing failures on a judge's whim or a fraction of a point can be more painful than a fall off the horizontal bar.

Thomas made the 1976 United States Olympic team but finished 21st in the all-round competition, hindered by stretched ligaments in one finger that he incurred several days before the competition.

"Kurt has an actor's demeanor and a good stage feel for the sport," says Connor, who is Thomas's chief American rival for all-round honors. "He can handle a greater degree of difficulty than the rest of us right now, and he really knows how to show off what he does best."

Thomas has a goal for this year's world championships -- a place in the top six. To achieve this he traveled extensively this spring, getting important exposure with judges and giving rivals something to ponder. He will spend much of the remainder of the summer polishing his compulsories; optionally, he feels that he can compete with any of the world's best.

As America's first prospect for an Olympic gold medal in gymnastics since 1932, Thomas carries a sizable burden. He works out seven days a week, sometimes for as long as eight hours a day, and is continually hounded by agents, corporations and the media.

"This summer's been the worst," Beth said. "But Kurt doesn't let anybody pressure him. Nobody pressures Kurt except himself."

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Homecoming schedule

Friday, Oct. 13

WOMEN'S TRIKE RACE. Marks Field, 3 p.m.

MEN'S TRIKE RACE. Marks Field, 4 p.m.

OPENHOUSE FOR ALUMNI. Alumni Center, 3 p.m.

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI. (photo-graphs/interviews), 408 Sheraton Inn, 5 p.m.

MISS EBONY pageant (finals), Tilson Music Hall, 7:30 p.m.

BLUE AND WHITE DANCE. Union Ballrooms, 9 p.m.

Saturday, Oct. 14

HOMECOMING PARADE. downtown, 9 a.m.

ALUMNI PICNIC. Memorial Stadium, 11:30 a.m.

PRE-GAME SHOW. Memorial Stadium, 1 p.m.

FOOTBALL GAME. Memorial Stadium, 1:30 p.m.

HALFTIME PRESENTATIONS. Memorial Stadium.

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI recognition dinner, Hulman Center, 5:30 recpt., 6:30 dinner.

CLASS REUNIONS

Classes of '37, '38, '39, Briarpatch, 5:30 p.m. cocktails.

Classes of '47, '48, '49, Ramada Inn, 5:30 p.m. cocktails.

Classes of '52, '53, '54, Sheraton Inn, 5:30 p.m. cocktails and dinner.

Classes of '57, '58, '59, Sheraton Inn, 5:30 p.m. cocktails and dinner.

BOB DYLAN HOMECOMING SHOW. Hulman Center, 8:30 p.m.

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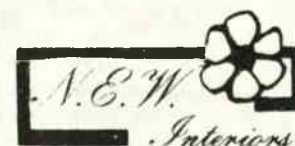
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Thomas, Kurt

Kurt Finishes 6th In World

S OCT 28 1978

STRASBOURG, France (AP) — Olympic gold medalist Nicolai Andrianov of the Soviet Union took the gold medal in the individual combined exercises at the World Gymnastics Championships Friday.

Kurt Thomas, Indiana State senior, moved from 11th to sixth in the final standings, realizing the goal he had set for himself before the Games and marking the highest finish for an American man since sometime in the 1940s.

Japan's Eizo Kenmotsu won the silver medal and Alexander Ditiatin of the Soviet Union took the bronze.

The Soviet gymnast who earlier in the week seemed hopelessly error prone, turned in a stellar performance, climaxed by a 9.90 points on the rings and two 9.85s on the floor and vault exercises.

His performance came in a showdown with Japan's former world champion, Shigeru Kasamatsu, who was edged by Thomas.

Kasamatsu missed the 1976 Olympics because of an operation, raising speculation that Andrianov's gold medal there was a hollow victory. But the Japanese placed seventh here.

Andrianov's scored a total of 117.20 points, Kenmotsu had 116.55 and Ditiatin 116.375.

Other top places were Eberhard Gienger of West Germany, fourth with 116.20; Hiroji Kajiyama of Japan, fifth with 115.90; and Thomas sixth with 115.725.

Thomas showed his best in the floor and vault exercises, his traditional strong points, but garnered an unexpected low 9.50 in rings.

Other U.S. gymnast to finish in the top ten was Bart Connor of Oklahoma, who was ninth with 115.20.

Connor moved with assurance and impressive ease except in the high bar where his routine showed technical faults.

"I was so confident beforehand it was almost scary," Connor said. "Can you believe it, two Americans in the top ten."

Thomas and Connor together were the driving force in lifting the U.S. squad's team standing from seventh in the world after Montreal to fourth here earlier this week.

Andrianov seemed confused at the award ceremony when some of the packed crowd of 8,000 whistled and booed. He said at a press conference afterwards, "I didn't understand what the crowd was feeling."

Asked how he felt his chances were in retaining his Olympic title in 1980, Andrianov said "I think the crowd will be a big help in winning in Moscow."

Only other American to get into the finals was Mike Wilson of Oklahoma, who finished 20th with 113.80. He offered a spotty performance with scores ranging from a 9.80 on the floor to a 9.30 on high bar, the lowest American score of the night.

Thomas was featured on *Good Morning America* Friday and highlights of the World Games will be shown Saturday starting at 4 p. m. on ABC's *Wide World of Sports*. The Sycamore standout is tied for second currently in floor exercise and will go for a medal in that event Sunday.

He and Coach Roger Counsil, who directed the U. S. team to its best finish ever, are scheduled to return to Terre Haute Monday, arriving at Hulman Field at 8:55 p. m.

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Kurt Thomas Wins First U.S.

ISU Star Scores 9.9

OCT 30 1978

STRASBOURG, France (UPI) — Kurt Thomas from Terre Haute, Indiana, won the United States' first Olympic or world championship title in 46 years when he took the gold medal in the floor exercises at the 19th World Gymnastics Championships Sunday.

The 22-year-old student at Indiana State University totalled 19.650 points to defeat

Japan's Shiguru Kasamatsu, who took the silver medal with 19.575 points. The bronze medal went to the Soviet Union's Alexandre Ditiatin with 19.400 points.

The last U.S. gymnast to win the title was George Gulack on the rings at the 1932 Olympics in Los Angeles, Calif. A magnificent routine by Thomas justifiably worth 9.900 points in the

voluntary exercises gave him a victory after his top rival, the Soviet Union's Nikolai Andrianov, Olympic and world all-around champion, twice stumbled during his routine.

Andrianov's mistake cost him the title, for Thomas, co-winner of the 1978 U.S. world championship trials, made no such blunders.

The United States, having its most successful international gymnastics competition ever, also won its first women's title in history when Marcia Frederick from Milford, Connecticut, took the uneven parallel bars gold medal.

The student from Milford, Conn., who scored a perfect 10 on the apparatus at this year's U.S. championships, had a total of 19.800 points.

Kathy Johnson, from Belcher, La. was joint third on the floor exercise with Romania's Emilia Eberle.

The 16-year-old Comaneci, whose power-weight ratio has been upset by her growth, proved she is still a great gymnast despite her fall from the uneven parallel bars Saturday, a mistake which cost her a medal in the supreme combined exercises event.

The Soviet Union's charming Nelli Kim picked up two apparatus golds - the vault and joint first place on the floor with her compatriot Moukhina, the combined exercises champion.

Gold Since '32

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(over)

Olympic gold medalist Nikolai Andrianov led the Soviet Union's assault on the mens' medals with the rings title and a silver medal on the vault. All together, the Soviet Union took 18 out of a possible 44 medals that were awarded for men and women's competition.

Japan, team champions, took gold medals on the final day through Junichi Shimizu on the vault, Shigeru Kasamatsu on the high bar and Eizo Kenmotsu on the parallel bars. It was a superb performance by Kenmotsu eight years after he took the world title.



BACK WITH GOLD MEDAL—Indiana State University gymnast Kurt Thomas won a gold medal in floor exercise at the World Games in Strasbourg, France, Sunday, the first gold in world competition by a U.S. gymnast since 1932. Thomas, second from left, is shown here departing for the Games with Coach Roger Counsil (left), who directed the U.S. team to a fourth-place finish, Larry Lidster of the Terre Haute Area Chamber of Commerce and Don Roberts, vice president for development at ISU. (Star Photo: Kadel)

Thomas, Kurt



GUESTS OF HONOR—Kurt Thomas, world-known gymnast, was honored by The Area Chamber of Commerce Friday along with his coach, Roger Counsil, and the rest of the Indiana State team. From the left are program emcee Mike McCormick, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas, Counsil and Larry Lidster, president of the C of C. (Star Photo: Keever)

Biog **Kurt Honored, Competes Today**

S NOV 11 1978

By TOM RECK
Star Sports Editor

The Indiana State gymnastics team ate well Friday and hopes to do well in its first meet Saturday night.

The Chamber of Commerce honored senior Kurt Thomas, in particular, and Coach Roger Counsil for their recent achievements in the World Games and the entire team was on hand for the luncheon—attended by a capacity crowd at The Sheraton Inn. Thomas won a gold medal in floor exercise, finished sixth in all around and helped the U. S. men take fourth in the Games, the best finishes ever for the U. S. in all categories.

Saturday night, at Columbus North, Thomas and some of the team will vie for individual honors in The Big Ten Classic. Kurt will work side horse, rings, and vaulting. He won't be in his award-winning event since Columbus grads Tod and Ted McVey will be in that one for ISU.

Rick Archer, freshman from Colorado (which produced ISU All-Americans Rick Dantley and Mike Booth),

is entered in side horse, California junior college champ Rick Charshafian in rings, Rich Apolinar in vaulting, Don Osborn and Gary Bernloehr in parallel bar, Osborn and Ernie Schroeder in high bar.

Top three finishers will be honored in the meet. There is no team scores and no all around. In the field are ISU, Indiana, Southern Illinois, Ball State, Michigan State, Ohio State and Illinois.

Next week, ISU will be in The Windy City Open, with a team title up for grabs.

Thomas thanked local fans and others for their support and described his gold medal performance in the Games. "Coach said I could do it. I was tied for second going into the finals," he recalled. Russian ace Adrianov was also in the finals.

"I always pray that everyone does their best before a meet but when Adrianov blew I knew I had a chance to win a medal. Once I got past my pass, I knew I was okay," he said. "but I still couldn't believe I won when it was over."

He said he got chills when they played the national anthem as he stood on the award stand. "I sang the words and I never did that before. I was thrilled. I was proud of my country and proud to be a winner," he said.

In the course of the Friday luncheon, Thomas twice was given a standing ovation and he signed more than a few autographs. On hand along with the coach and the team was Kurt's wife, Beth.

Larry Lidster, president of the chamber, thanked several people for their help in the program and especially recognized Sheraton's Jim Caruso, a former gymnast at ISU. Mike McCormick, a Chamber member, introduced Thomas and some film was shown from the 1977 NCAA when ISU tied Oklahoma for team honors as well as from final trials for the Games. His floor ex routine was part of that footage.

Later, Thomas will compete in The World Cup in Brazil and has been invited to give an exhibition in Arizona as part of a tour by the Romanian team.

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Thomas, Kurt Kurt Thomas: good for ISU and gymnastics

Biog Sp NOV 13 1978 Chamber salutes medal winning gymnastics star

By Mike McCormick

When Indiana State gymnast Kurt Thomas and his coach, Roger Counsil, departed for Strasbourg, France two weeks ago to participate in the 19th World Gymnastics championships, they had one major goal.

They wanted Thomas to finish in the top six in the all-around, the highest ranking ever for an American.

Friday noon, the Terre Haute Area Chamber of Commerce will fete Thomas, Counsil, and the other members of ISU's gymnastics squad for achieving that goal.

But, Thomas, who also won the first gold medal by an American in international gymnastics competition in 46 years by finishing first in the floor exercise, is a man with many goals.

Next, Thomas has set his sights on winning the all-around competition in the National Collegiate Athletic Association championships in 1979 over his friend, competitor and nemesis, Bart Conner of Oklahoma, America's "other" world-class gymnast.

And, then, there is the 1980 Olympics where Terre Haute's adopted son seeks to become the first American to win the gold in gymnastics since George Gulack accomplished the feat at the 1932 Olympics in Los Angeles.

Thomas is a winner and, together with Counsil, has become America's travelling ambassador. His travel schedule over the past year would match Henry Kissinger's. Since participating in the 1976 Olympics in Montreal, Thomas has successfully competed in the World University Games in Sofia, Bulgaria, twice in the Romanian Invitational and once in the Champions-All meet in London, England.

In the meantime, he has taken care of duties at home, twice winning the U.S. Gymnastics Federation championship, twice dazzling Madison Square Garden crowds in American Cup competition and leading his school to the 1977 NCAA team title by winning the all-around championship.

He also managed to have time to win his wife's hand in marriage in a New Year's Eve ceremony. She is the former Beth Osting of Rushville.

It was his marriage that probably secured Thomas' ties to Indiana. But the Miami (Fla.) native, who has already announced his intention to enroll at Arizona State next year for postgraduate study and preparation for the Moscow Olympics, will not be forgotten here soon. The national attention he has received may force Indiana



Kurt Thomas takes to the floor.

Photo by ISU AVC

State to move some of its gymnastics meets, from the ISU Arena to Hulman Center to accommodate the crowds expected in the forthcoming collegiate season.

Those watching him perform see a perfectionist and a pioneer. His leg-sweeping "Thomas flair" on the pommel horse is being imitated in all corners of the world. And, his recent floor exercise in the World Games incorporated some innovative tricks.

For the 1980 Olympics, Thomas has been working on a triple backward dismount with a full twist off the horizontal bars that may be the most exciting, and dangerous, thing he has ever attempted.

Thomas is a crowd pleaser and the crowd expected at the Sheraton Inn to fete him, his coach and his team will offer congratulations and thanks. Congratulations for the recent gold medal and international success; thanks for introducing gymnastics to America and giving it a new image.

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Council has seen Kurt grow to stardom in gymnastics

TS DEC 31 1978

Biography

Roger Council has earned the right and privilege no one else in Terre Haute has had the past two or three years: he's been able to see most of Kurt Thomas' world-wide winnings and seen the Sycamore gymnast move into the elite among the world.

As his coach at Indiana State and as coach of the World Games team that took fourth last fall in France, Council has accompanied Thomas to spots all around the world. Now, he and his star are concentrating fully on the dual meet season that commences here January 13 against Arizona State and the NCAA championships in April.

As much as he has been around Kurt—both in the Arena practice room and in meets—Council says, "I am amazed Kurt stays as excited as he does in all the meets. He's always enthusiastic about competition. He was just as keyed up for the Ball State All Around Classic as he was for some meet overseas. It's that meets provide him the chance to do what he does best I suppose and he always does it the best way he knows."

Winning the gold medal in floor exercise in the World Games was a highlight of Kurt. Watching for his coach, he said, because it represented so much for the United States in the sport that's been dominated by other countries. "It brought so much recognition for Kurt. And at the meet it made me realize how big the World Games and gymnastics is in the world. The crowd was as vocal there in France as it is for a high school basketball game in Indiana," he recalled of the day Kurt stole the show.

The U. S. and Kurt will have the chance to improve their medal winnings next year when the World Games will be in Fort Worth. "We decided to have them every two years instead of four and next year's meet provides for the changeover," Council commented. He, of course, could well be the coach again. The U. S., he said, may not compete in the

Pan-Am Games next year. "The Cubans want to use compulsories they have written themselves instead of the ones developed for the rest of the world. If they don't back down, America probably will not compete in gymnastics," said the coach, offering another insight into the political overtones of the sport and offering still more emphasis of Kurt's progress and recognition earned the hard, honest way.

Council said he first got a line on his super star from Bruce Davis who is Muriel Grossfeld's brother. Muriel is possibly the top women's coach in the sport. "He was coaching in Miami and I contacted Kurt and brought him in for a visit," said Council. Later, Kurt told a reporter being brought in by plane was impressive since a football player, the well known Elvis Peacock, was being flown all around the country and he was from his same school. Being flown in by ISU put Kurt in the same world as a famous football star.

"Kurt did very well for a freshmen when we had the NCAA here but he was scared like the others at times too. Now, when he is around the Russians—the best in the world—it doesn't phase him at all. That's one sign of Kurt's growth," Council notes.

In addition to his appearances in meets around the world, Kurt has been on several television shows including Johnny Carson's famed late-night program, the one hosted by Merv Griffin and more. He has an invite pending from Dinah Shore now. His first appearance of note, recalls Council, was on the talk show hosted by Phil Donahue. He and Council and John Golbeck were on along with Cathy Rigby.

Since then, his fame has spread. This week, he was the answer for a question on *Jeopardy* and that's notoriety.

He's been featured on Home Box Office as part of the USGF Championships and when the U. S. met the

Japanese and won last winter. He's been on The American Cup on ABC, Champions All on ABC and the Chunichi Cup. Coming up will be his gold medal feat January 13 on ABC and later his top finish in The World Cup. At the same time, ISU's meet with Arizona State will be taped by HBO and shown in February.

And just what kind of role does Council play in this story. It's obviously no small one. "I see my role as less and less as a teacher-coach. Instead, I'm more like a father, confessor, masseur or valet," Council said.

And what makes Kurt Thomas the star he is today? "It's the ease with which he learns and retains skills. And they're not just skills, they're difficult skills. He also has a little chutzpah. You've got to have some of that to do what he has in this sport. He's not the least bit intimidated by the so-called elite. He knows what he is worth and he sells it. You can be good in this sport and not be able to do that," Council says of Kurt.

Working with the team at ISU, Council says, "Every athlete has a model in his sport and we have ours right in the room with us every day. He's a model in terms of attitude because he's such a hard worker. He kills the other guys if they try to keep up with him."

Looking to the 1980 Olympics, Council says, "Kurt has learned new things even since the World Cup and the Russians will go back and work hard. What's new today may be old tomorrow in gymnastics. We'll have to come up with some things others haven't done to excel in Russia. You don't keep up with the Joneses. You stay ahead of them. Creativity is one aspect of this sport.

"Since we operate in a democracy, Kurt will be doing this on his own and not under some sort of government plan. It takes a certain type of person to care enough about a sport to get where he has and stay there."

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Community Affairs File

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SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31, 1978 C-1

DEC 31 1978

If they had a draft of American gymnasts as they do in baseball, basketball and football, Kurt Thomas would be number one without a doubt this coming year and sign a contract that would be the envy of some of the highest paid pros.

As it is, the Indiana State world class athlete will finish school and then turn full attention to the 1980 Olympics in Moscow, meaning he'll remain an amateur. He will be able to enjoy more benefits once he's no longer eligible under NCAA rules, but the man who won a gold medal in last fall's World Games still can't be paid for what he does best and so well.

It doesn't bother the Sycamore senior who says he stays motivated to work out daily when most other students and athletes are taking a full break from work and studies. He's motivated, he feels, because of his success. He's been US Gymnastics Federation champ three years now and, as he noted, he doesn't want to let go.

"It's hard to work sometimes, super hard," said America's ranking male gymnast as he toiled in a near-empty ISU Arena.

While the gold medal he won in floor exercise in France last fall as he helped the U. S. men take fourth—coached by Roger Counsil—in their best showing ever in a world meet was a big thrill and brought him the most publicity, Thomas says placing sixth in all around in the same meet and then second in the World Cup later in the year were probably his top achievements of the past year.

"I just moved a few steps closer to the big guys and I've beaten Dijatin already," Thomas added. Russian Aleksandre Dijatin is the only man who finished ahead of him in The World Cup and then by a slim .10 of a point. Thomas added the Russians have a lot of guys close together and he said it would be difficult to say which would be the man to beat from the host country in 1980's sports show.

Team-wise, with Thomas, Bart Conner and Mike Wilson leading the way along with youngsters Jim Hartung and Phil Cahoy, the U. S. still is a step or two behind Japan and Russian, Kurt feels, but has a shot at East Germany, the third-place team in the World Games. "Bart and I have been in a lot of international meets and Wilson is coming. If we all stay together and improve the team, we can get third in 1980," Thomas avers.

As he reflected earlier, motivation comes from success. He's on top and wants to stay there. "I'm in a special meet in New Mexico January 6 and 7 and I don't want to lose there," he noted. Then, a week later, January 13, Arizona State comes to ISU to help the Sycamores open the regular dual meet season.

ASU is one of the top teams this year and is where Kurt plans to do graduate work and train for Moscow and the meet will be taped for a showing in February on Home Box Office Television. "I sure hope we can win that one," he said.

In nearly the same breath, he says ISU is not the favorite in the NCAA this year but, too, doesn't count out the possibility of the Sycamores winning as they did two years

ago, tying Oklahoma for honors at Arizona State. Thomas feels Nebraska is the top team right now.

Recalling the championship season when he also won the NCAA all around crown (the all around winner doesn't usually come from the team champ), Kurt said, "That team had all the right ingredients. We have a lot of young guys on this team but ISU will always be up there. ISU will always be respectable."

In addition to the NCAA, Kurt will be competing in The Champions All in England again, The American Cup in New York and the USGF Championships which will serve as trials for the Pan-Am Games. He has won the Romanian Invitational the past two years—surprising the loaded host field to do it and becoming somewhat of a folk hero in the process—but he says he'll pass that one up this year. The Romanians have a chance to win again.

Doing all he has done in gymnastics and making the television appearances—both in meets and on other shows—has opened doors says Kurt and he has some rather definite plans following the NCAA. He'll be doing his student teaching, for one, and work in a camp planed by Coach Counsil at Rose-Hulman in the summer.

And just how did this young man from Miami happen to choose ISU and bring the publicity and recognition he has to the school and community? "The team had some really good guys and really worked together. They were close and Counsil was really the only one who showed a lot of interest in me. I wanted to go to a small school too," recalled Thomas.

He admitted he didn't know about ISU before he was recruited by Counsil (but he sure has helped spread the word since he has been here).

He says he still enjoys the travel although he's had his share in the past two or three years, pointing out gymnastics has "paid off" for him in that he's been able to see so much of the world.

It's also given his wife, Beth, a chance to travel with him. They will celebrate their first anniversary this week and Kurt feels marriage has had nothing but a positive effect on him. "Beth has really been patient and understanding. She works two jobs and carries a full load in school while I don't even work. It's hard to find a girl like that," he said admiringly of Mrs. Thomas.

Kurt and Larry: athletes of the year

(over)

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Tracy Caulkins captures coveted Sullivan Award

BY MICHAEL J. LUNSFORD
Tribune Sports Writer

INDIANAPOLIS — Indiana State gymnast Kurt Thomas failed in his bid for the prestigious Sullivan Award for the outstanding amateur athlete of the United States on Thursday, losing out to 16-year-old swimmer Tracy Caulkins, but wasn't despondent, saying, "It was just a fantastic thrill for me to be here."

Thomas, winner of a gold medal at the World Gymnastics Championships at Strausbourg, France, in October, was the first American male to rate a first in world-caliber competition since 1932, and was, along with marathon runner Bill Rodgers, considered the favorite to win the award presented at the Indianapolis Athletic Club.

The Sycamores' senior tallied 1,262 points to trail Caulkins' 2,236 and Rodgers' 1,747, but graciously said, "Being the first male gymnast to ever be nominated for this award was the big climax for me tonight, and then placing third on top of that was really a thrill for me."

Caulkins became the youngest winner of the award in its 48 years — it was first awarded to golfing great Bobby Jones in 1930 — and did so riding the reputation of her having broken or tied 27 world and national swimming marks in 1978.

The Nashville, Tenn., native, who turned 16 Jan. 11, was the only female athlete among the 10 finalists for the accolade, and became only the fifth woman to win the award. She joins swimmer Ann Curtis (1944), diver Patricia McCormick (1956), sprinter Wilma Rudolph (1961), and swimmer Deborah Meyer (1968) as the only women winners. Meyer was previously the youngest award winner, a few months older than Caulkins.

Caulkins said, in accepting the award, which is a figure of a runner carrying a branch mounted on a pedestal, "I know I was thrilled with my first national championship and with my first world championship, but this tops it all. It was a great honor just to be nominated, and I'd like to congratulate all the other nominees. I'm honored to represent my sport and win such an award."

The award, officially the James E. Sullivan Award, is sponsored by the Amateur Athletic Union. Sullivan was founder of the AAU, which is now

headquartered here, in 1888, and was the organization's president from 1906 to 1908.

Other nominees this year were Michigan diver Phil Boggs, equestrian Bruce Davidson, speed skater Eric Heiden, weightlifter Lee James, wrestler Leroy Kemp, hurdler Edwin Moses, figure skater Charles Tickner, Rodgers and Thomas.

Heiden was the only nominee not present for the award presentation, while the other nine nominees gave brief interviews with American Broadcasting Cos.' Chris Schenkel before the winner was announced.

Many considered Rodgers the favorite. He had a string of 18 straight marathon victories including wins in the 1977 Boston and New York races.

Moses posted nine of the world's top 10 times in the 400-meter intermediate hurdles in 1978, is the world record holder in that event and the 1976 Olympic champion.

Beside Schenkel, who was master of ceremonies for the event, Mayor William Hudnut and AAU President Robert Helmick were also on hand. Helmick is a one-time All-American in water polo and was manager of the U.S. water polo team in the 1972 Olympics. Chairman of the event was Frank E. McKinney Jr., who was awarded a special medallion. McKinney was a bronze, silver and gold medal swimmer and was nominated for the Sullivan award in 1958, '59 and '60.

Others present were Rep. Don Lash, a distance runner and winner of the award in 1938; Fred Wilt, the Sullivan winner in 1950; and John Nabor, 1977 Sullivan winner and presenter of the award to Caulkins.

Nabor said about winning the award, "It's nice to be remembered two years after ending my career. I feel very much a part of this tonight, and feel like I belong. Sitting here are the equivalent of nine Heisman Trophy winners, the best in their respective sports. They've trained and sacrificed for the love of their sport."

"Last year, I said this award was the greatest thing I ever received. You can probably tell I still feel the same way."

Thomas, 22, a senior from Holly-

Continued on Page 11, Col. 2

(over)

wood, Fla., will no doubt be in line for similar ceremonies next year. America's hope in his sport for the 1980 Olympic Games in Moscow, Thomas said after Caulkins was presented the award, "I don't think the voting was decided by who accomplished the most, because all of us were all very talented athletes, or we wouldn't be here. But I think Tracy was the one to win. She is incredible and I congratulate her."

Accompanying Thomas to the banquet were his wife, Beth, Indiana State University President Richard Landini, Athletic Director Bob King, and gymnastics Coach Roger Council, whom Thomas praised for his help.

The balloting for the honor is open to past winners, members of the AAU board of governors, and the U.S. Olympic Committee executive board. The rest of the voters are members of the press and broadcast media.

Perhaps the most prestigious athletic trophy in America besides college football's Heisman, the Sullivan Award has gone to some of the most legendary names in American athletics and one can be nominated for the award times over. Some previous winners are Bruce Jenner (1976), Bill Walton (1973), Mark Spitz (1971), Bill Toomey (1969), Jim Ryun (1966), Rafer Johnson (1960), Bob Mathias (1948), Felix "Doc" Blanchard (1945) and Don Budge (1937).

Thomas said he expects to be up for the award again next year, noting it took Jenner, 1976 Olympic decathlon champion, three tries at the award.

Caulkins' father proudly accepted the trophy with his daughter, saying, "It has taken a lot of time and a lot of money to help her, but even if she never won a medal, it has been worth every minute and worth every dime."



TEARFUL WINNER — Tracy Caulkins, 16, takes a moment to regain her composure before commenting on the James E. Sullivan Award, which was presented to her Thursday night in Indianapolis. Caulkins, the youngest ever to win the award as the Amateur Athletic Union's top athlete of the year, broke or tied 27 world and American swim records in 1978. With her is John Naber, last year's recipient of the Sullivan. Kurt Thomas of Indiana State was third in the voting.

UPI

Thomas, Kurt

A tribute to Kurt Thomas: Meeting President Carter

Biography

FEB 21 1979

By CHARLES J. MALOOF
Tribune Staff Writer

Despite the existence of nearly two feet of snow on the ground in Washington, D.C., Indiana State University All-America gymnast Kurt Thomas plans to keep his Thursday appointment with President Jimmy Carter at the White House.

"I'll be leaving at 8:30 a.m. Thursday with my wife, Beth, and (ISU) President (Richard) Landini and maybe a few alumni," Thomas told The TRIBUNE Tuesday. "We're taking a chartered plane directly from Terre Haute to Dulles International Airport in Washington. We were told everything would be cleared off and there wouldn't be any trouble."

ISU gymnastics coach Roger Counsil and his wife, Dr. Robert Thompson and several ISU faculty members were scheduled to depart at noon Wednesday for Washington, according to Thomas. "Coach Counsil and the others are going early in order to set up a press conference, make banquet plans and plan a sight-seeing tour," he said.

Thomas indicated his flight was to arrive at 10 a.m. Thursday in the nation's capital. "I'm supposed to meet President Carter at noon and talk with him for about an hour," he noted. "After the meeting, I'll have lunch with Sen. Birch Bayh (D-Ind.). My wife is to accompany me the entire time."

But it's back to the rigors of competition on Friday for Thomas.

He is to compete at 7:30 p.m. Friday in the Mardi Gras Invitational at the Louisiana State University Sports Arena in Baton Rouge, La. "It is an international meet because someone from France is participating," Thomas stated. "I didn't compete last year in this meet, but I won it two years ago. CBS is going to be there and tape it for a future telecast."

Capping off this memorable weekend, Thomas is to fly to Los Angeles Saturday for an appearance on a Bob Hope Special. That program is to be broadcast on March 2.

Thomas' schedule will keep him from joining the ISU gymnastics

team in a home meet at 7:30 p.m. Friday in the Arena. He will also miss a Saturday gymnastics meet at the University of Illinois.

The Sycamore gymnastics squad is now ranked first in the country by virtue of its 223.2-213.95 victory over Michigan last weekend. ISU's score in that meet was reported as the best in the country.

Thomas, who looks forward to being a member of the United States Olympic team that will participate in the 1980 Summer Olympiad in Moscow, took all-around honors in the win over Michigan.

He was first in floor exercise, pommel horse, rings and parallel bars and tied for the top spot in the high bar event with ISU teammates Don Osborn and Rich Apolinar.

Although it appears the Indiana State basketball team will have to try harder to become No. 1 in the nation, the school's gymnastics team is solidly entrenched in the top spot behind the efforts of the No. 1 performer in this sport in the country, and perhaps in the world.



THOMAS IN FLOOR EXERCISE — A WORLD CHAMPION



THOMAS' SPECIALTY — THE THOMAS FLAIR



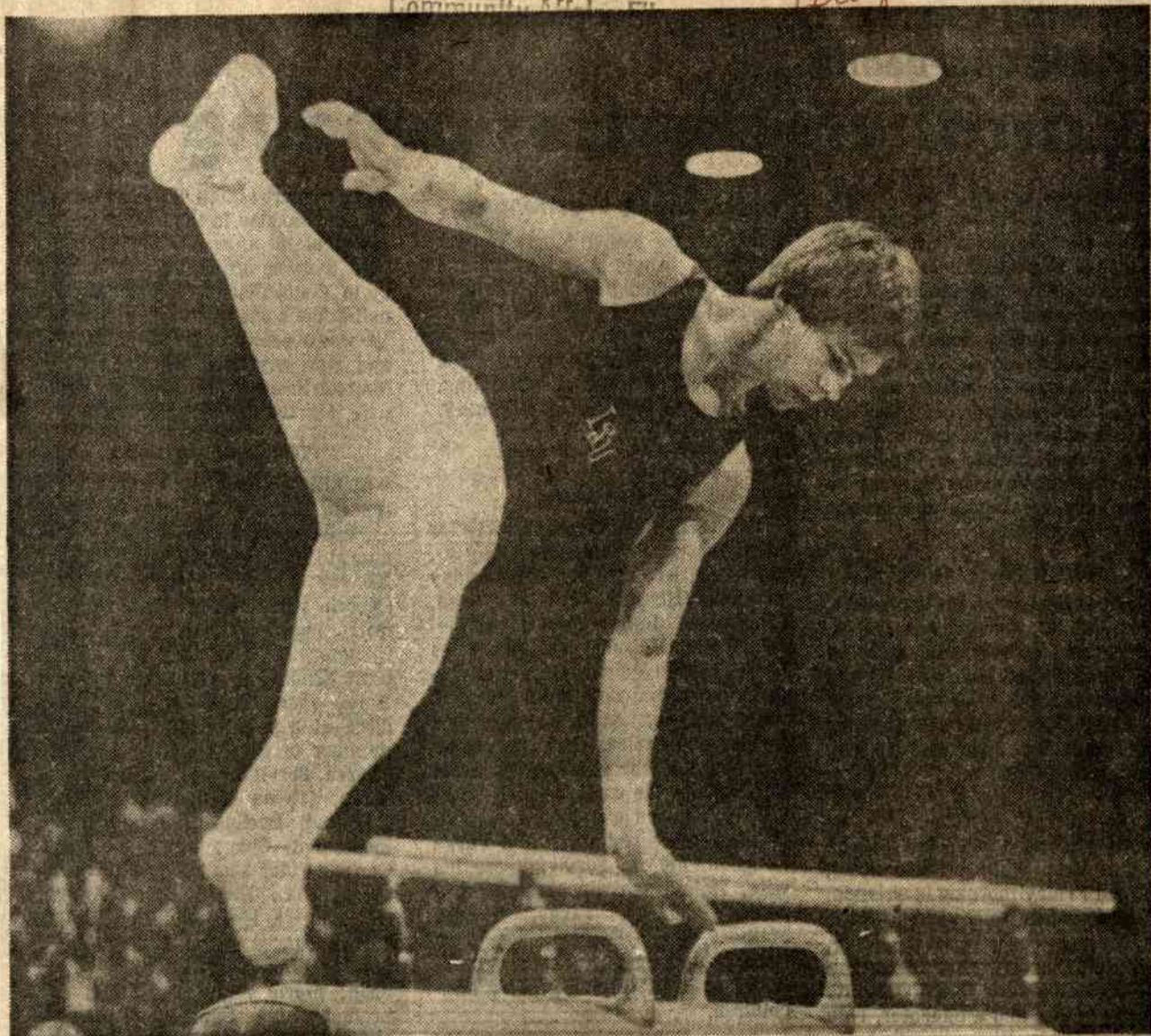
AN ALL-AROUND VERSATILITY — THOMAS ON THE RINGS

Thomas, Kurt

T MAR 3 1979

Community Affairs File

Biog



GOODBYE THOMAS FLAIR — Olympic hopeful Kurt Thomas treated local fans to his last home gymnastic exercise during Friday night's meet between Indiana State University and Ohio State

University. The senior Thomas led the Sycamores to their highest score of the year by winning all events except the vault. (See related story on Page 8.)
House of Photography

Community Affairs File

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Thomas, Kurt

Cup Repeat

Thomas Seeks American

By TOM RECK
Star Sports Editor

Kurt Thomas seeks his second American Cup title in the prestigious New York gymnastics event this weekend, going against the best in the world again.

The Sycamore senior and Coach Roger Council will take off for New York Friday for the meet which will be run Saturday and Sunday in Madison Square Garden. ABC-TV will tape the action for future showing on a *Wide World of Sports* program

Phil Cahoy, Omaha high school senior, is another American in the meet and Kathy Johnson is one of two U. S. women entered.

It's the third time Thomas has gone to New York. Two years ago, he was nipped by Mitsuo Tsukara by a tenth of a point and the Japanese ace then said the kid from Miami was "the

best" and he certainly knew what he was talking about then.

Since that time, of course, Thomas has done just about everything a gymnast can and things no U. S. gymnast had ever done before he came on the scene. Local fans know the story and much of the rest of the world does too with the media exposure that has made Kurt a star in his own right.

Last year, he won every event in the American Cup and no one has done that in this meet. Thomas is looking forward to going back to New York and says he's in pretty good shape for the action.

"I have a small thumb sprain. Other than that, I'm in good shape," he said this week in practice. He isn't sure where his main competition will come from but he pointed to Bruckner of East Germany and

5 MAR 9 1979

Japan's Shomuzi as two strong men.

Russia's entries hadn't been confirmed at mid-week. Last year, Kishnikov was second to Thomas and he may be back this time.

In the first year of this meet, Bart Conner—now at Oklahoma—was the American gymnast and he won the title. He and other Big Eight gymnasts are in a conference meet this weekend.

From New York, Thomas and his wife will head for Atlanta for a specialty meet in which he and Miss Johnson will represent the U. S. They will alternate events for men and women and the 10 scores will be totaled for a team tally. Then comes a day of rest and relaxation for the U. S. and visiting gymnasts in Florida.

Thomas then will return to campus where he and his ISU teammates will work through spring break in preparation for the March 23-24 NCAA Re-

gional at Northern Illinois, where ISU will battle NIU, Minnesota, Michigan, Southern Illinois and others for the right to advance to the finals at LSU. Two teams and six individuals will go to the national meet from each regional.

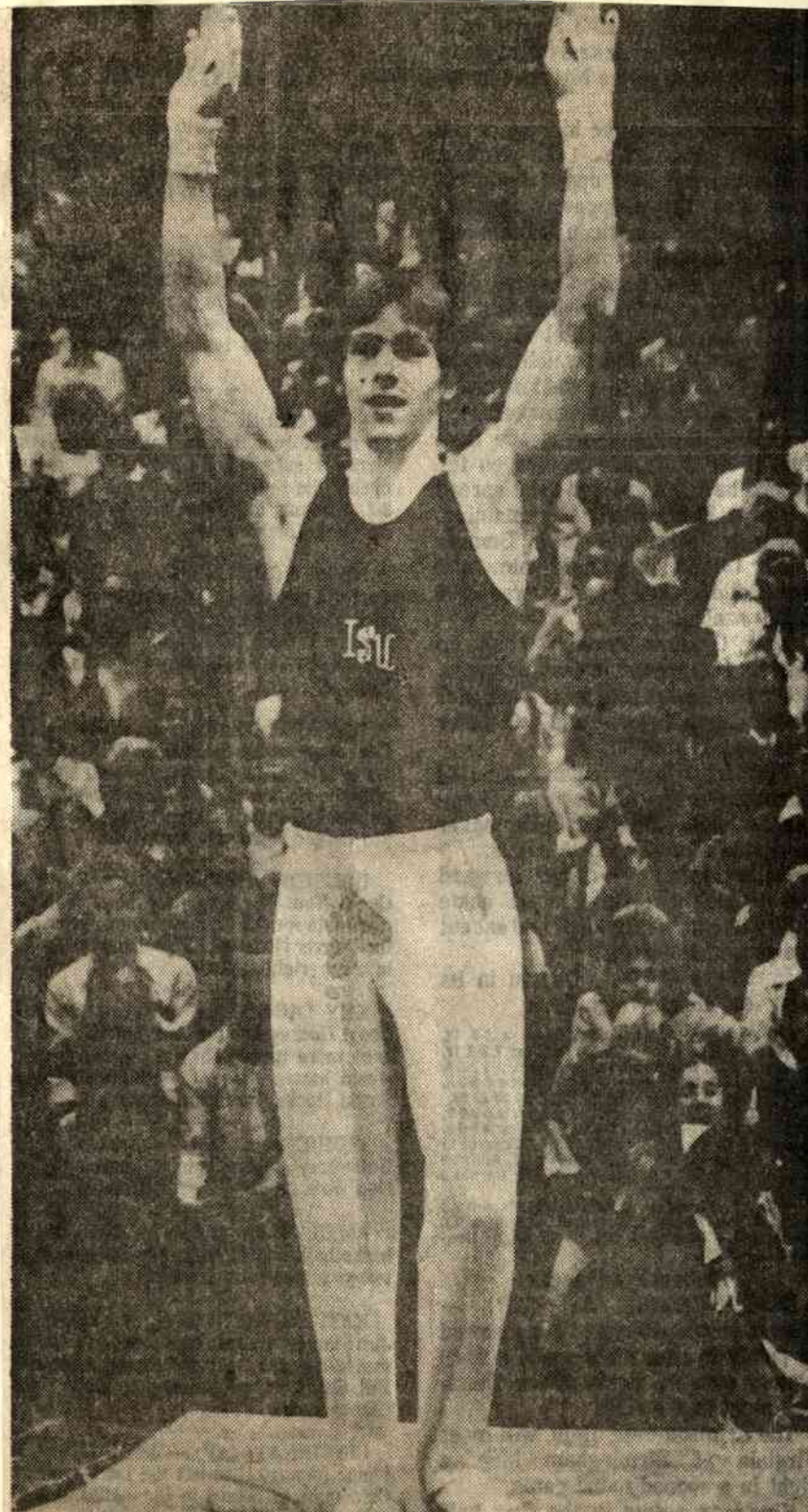
"We'll really work hard now and then taper a few days before the regional," says Council. He said two-day workouts will start next week.

Thomas feels the team is "looking super... great" in workouts. Both he and Don Osborn and possibly Rich Apolinar should be among the all around contenders in the nationals.

In the most recent rankings, ISU is third in the coaches poll while the Sycamore score of 223.35 is best in the country.

Among the other top teams are Nebraska, Arizona State, NIU, SIU, Oregon, Oklahoma, Iowa State, Southern Connecticut and Penn State.

(over)



KURT THOMAS—Going To New York

Star Photo: Kadel

Kurt Thomas goes to Washington

Community Affairs File

By Charlie Green
States News Service

WASHINGTON -- The Kurt Thomas road show stopped in Washington long enough recently for the Indiana State gymnast to meet a president, lunch with a senator and smile for the press.

Thomas, perhaps the best American male ever to swing from the rings, was introduced to Carter during a four-minute session in the Oval Office.

Flanked by his wife, Beth, university officials and Sen. Birch Bayh, Thomas listened as Carter congratulated him on his gymnastic feats.

"He was really sincere in what he said," Thomas said later.

The 22-year-old acknowledged, however, that he felt somewhat out of his element amidst the political officials, since he's not too interested in government.

He didn't vote in the last presidential election, he said. If he had, he probably would have voted for Ford, not Carter, because his mother was a Ford supporter.

The meeting with Carter was first requested last May by Bob Thompson, director of University Relations at Indiana State. Thompson was able to convince Bayh that the meeting would be worthwhile, and Bayh then helped arrange it with White House officials.

"In Terre Haute, we're aware of his international significance and soon they became very aware," Thompson said, relating how he sent press clippings and posters of Thomas to Washington as part of the campaign for the meeting.

"Kurt is a fine gentleman and an outstanding goodwill ambassador for the country," Thompson said.

Thomas is considered one of the U.S.'s best prospects for the 1980 Olympic Games in Moscow. Last year he became the first American male in 46 years to capture an international gymnastic event by winning a gold medal at the World Games in France.

After the sessions Thursday with Carter and Bayh, Thomas flew to Louisiana where he will compete Friday night. From there, he will travel to Burbank, Calif. where he will appear on a taping for a Bob Hope special saluting U.S. athletes.

"He's just on the go constantly," said an obviously pleased Ed McKee, sports information director at Indiana State.

McKee said that with the mounting publicity surrounding Thomas and Larry Bird, ISU's premier basketball player, the university is basking in glory.

"Now there's real pride in the university," McKee said. "Alumni are coming out of the woodwork."

Thomas, with his willingness to attend banquets and appear on talk shows, fits in perfectly with the university's hopes to become better known.

Why was Thomas not joined by the less talkative Bird at the White House meeting?

"Larry Bird is representing Indiana State University; Kurt is representing the United States in international competition," said Thompson.

Thomas just said he was promoting "the sport, myself and the school."



Photo by Charlie Green

President Carter expressed his admiration for the achievements of Kurt Thomas during a meeting in the Oval Office in the White House. With Thomas is wife Beth and Senator Birch Bayh, who arranged the meeting. Thomas also visited Capitol Hill, where he chatted with Senator Bayh (below) in his office before going to the White House.



Photo by Richard Paul

fifty years ago

Five-year-old Dorsey drowns, but is revived

William Dorsey, 5, fell into a cistern at his parents' home, 405 N. Third St., and was in the water about 10 minutes before being discovered. Although he was believed to be dead, Fireman Walter Scott restored the youngster's breathing after about 20 minutes by rolling him on a barrel. A pulmonator from P. J. Ryan & Sons was later brought in to bring full restoration.

Ex-Klansman arraigned

Joseph Huffington, a former resident of Terre Haute and an ex-Klan leader, pleaded not guilty when he was arraigned in federal court for alleged complicity in the auto theft ring of which several members were recently convicted in an Indianapolis federal court. Many of those members are now serving time in the government prison at Leavenworth.

Dope offender fined

Don Finlayson, an old dope offender, called Dr. M. R. Combs to his house on North Walter Street to attend to the illness of Finlayson's wife. However, while the doctor was taking care of Mrs. Finlayson, Mr. Finlayson stole morphine tablets from the physician's medicine bag. Judge Beecher of city court gave him a \$1 fine and sentenced him to the Indiana State Farm for six months. At the end of his term, it is believed that the dope will be out of his system.

Gas tax raised

The four-cent tax bill passed in the senate, already having been passed in the house. The bill will now go to the governor, who has endorsed it in his inaugural address. It raises the gas tax from three to four cents a gallon. The additional money received from the increase will be spent in road building.

32 area basketball officials picked for tourney

Terre Haute's standing in the basketball world has never been better demonstrated

than in the selection of the officials for the regional contests of the high school basketball tournaments. A total of 32 officials were named from the Wabash Valley area to officiate the high school basketball regional games.

Biel's tobacco shop will move soon

Charles H. Biel's wholesale tobacco and cigar store, now located at 322 Wabash Ave., will move in the near future to 420 Wabash Ave. The new store is currently under going several remodeling changes. The store was formerly a shoe store and this is the first time in more than a third of a century that it has been used by any other person than a retail shoe merchant. Thomas H. Griffith, formerly one of the leading shoe merchants of the city, occupied the store for many years. It was later used for the same business by J. B. Walsh.

Society section

The Girls' Friendly will hold its regular supper meeting on Monday evening at 6:30 p.m. at St. Stephen's Parish House. Miss Edith Nitsche's and Miss Vickroy's groups will be in charge. All girls who have not signed up, must make their reservations immediately by calling either of their associates or the Vickroy Art Shop. Following the supper, the candle ceremony will be held for the new girls.

Mrs. G. I. Kisner, of 2125 N. 11th St., is hostess this afternoon for the Baby View Reading Club. Roll call will be answered by quotations from women writers.

Mature, dependable **BABYSITTER**, desperately needed for summer, spring, vacations and snow days. 8 and 10 years old. South Call **299-4238 after 4.** References required.

Gladys Christian on guaranteed sales:

"The Larry Helman Agency can help you find a new home on the other end of your transfer, pay you the equity in your present home before it's sold, and take the worry out of being transferred with our Guaranteed Sales Plan." Guaranteeing sales has helped Gladys Christian's personal involvement in the sale of more than a million dollars of real estate in 1978.

238-2526



Larry Helman has the key.



Beltone

SENIOR CITIZENS' MENU

Monday, March 12

Chicken and Dumplings
Pickled Beets
Apple Juice
Cheese Wedge
Rye Bread
Margarine
Cookies
Milk
Coffee/Tea

Tuesday, March 13

Salisbury Steak
Green Beans
Hominy
White Bread
Margarine
Pie
Milk
Coffee/Tea

Wednesday, March 14

Ham and Beans
Cole Slaw
Orange Juice
Corn Bread
Margarine
Fruit
Milk
Coffee/Tea

Thursday, March 15

Fish
Peas and Carrots
Cottage Cheese w/Pineapple
Wheat Bread
Margarine
Cake
Milk
Coffee/Tea

Friday, March 16

Pork Chop w/Gravy
Mashed Potatoes
Broccoli
Roll
Margarine
Seafoam Salad
Milk
Coffee/Tea



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Thomas
Kurt

Biography
Thomas wins Cup

T MAR 1 2 1979

NEW YORK (AP) — Indiana State's Kurt Thomas, and Stella Zakarova of the Soviet Union captured the men's and women's titles in Sunday afternoon's American Cup Gymnastics competition at Madison Square Garden, but 12-year-old Tracee Talavera of Eugene, Ore., won the hearts of the 13,844 fans.

Talavera, competing in her first major competition, finished first in the uneven parallel bars and the balance beam competition, but had to settle for third place behind Zakarova and East Germany's Maxi Gnauck.

In the balance beam competition, Zakarova was penalized for finishing 0.05 seconds short of the required time. Her score would have been 9.60, the same as Talavera's, but the penalty reduced her mark to 9.40.

Zakarova was first in both the vault and the floor exercise. She totaled 38.35, ahead of Gnauck, who logged 38.10. Talavera had a score of 38.05 and another American girl, Kathy Johnson of Cocoa Beach, Fla., was fourth with 37.25.

Thomas won his second straight men's title, winning four of the six events, losing only to Zoltan Magyar of Hungary in the pommel horse, and Junichi Shimuzi of Japan in the vault. Both are Olympic and world champs in those events.

"I was consistent on both the qualifying round and today," said Thomas, who scored 58.00 aggregate Saturday, and won with 58.10 Sunday. "This is a stepping stone to the Olympics.

"There are 10 world class gymnasts in the men's competition and six or seven of them are Russian or Japanese. I'm glad to be among them."

Thomas is a good friend of ISU basketball star Larry Bird.

"He is a better gymnast than I am a basketball player," quipped Thomas. "He instructs gymnastics when I am practicing in the gym every morning."

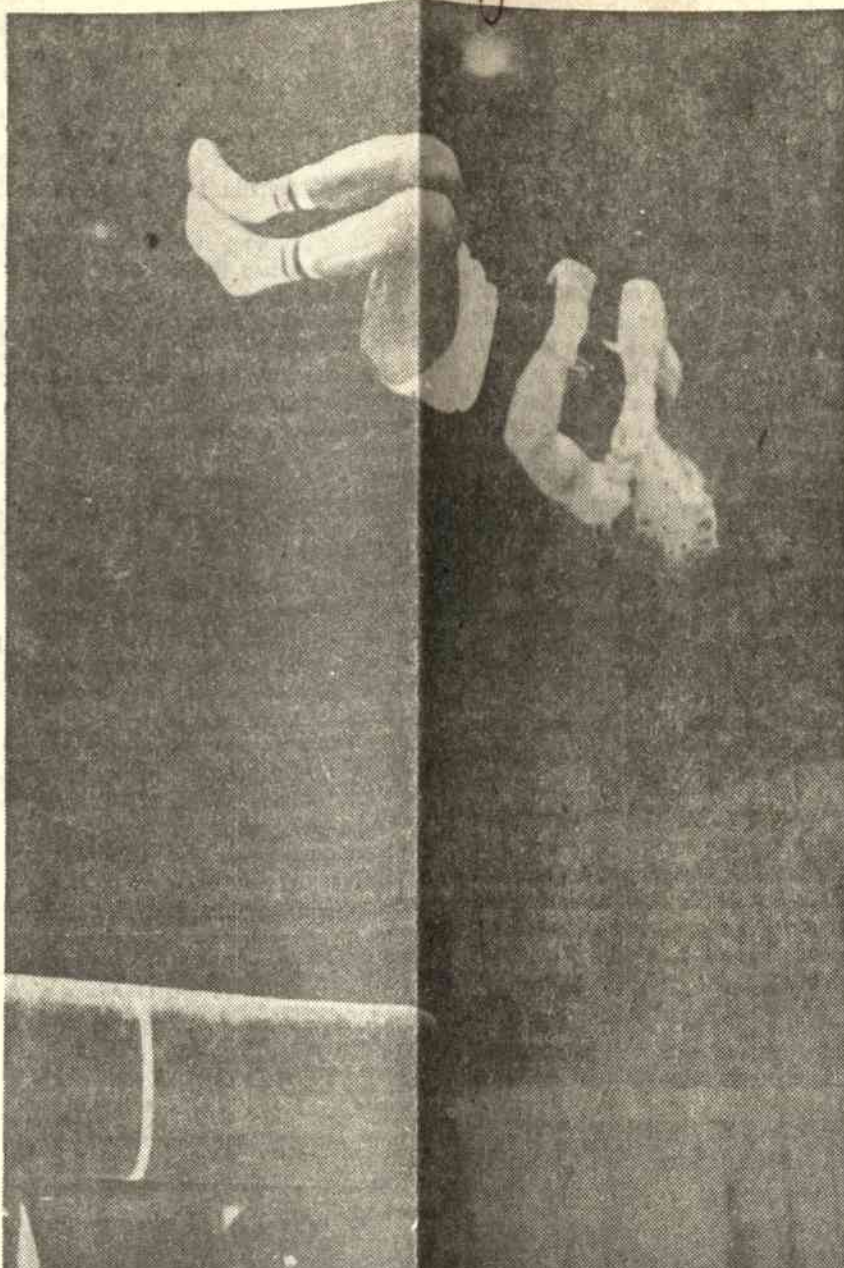
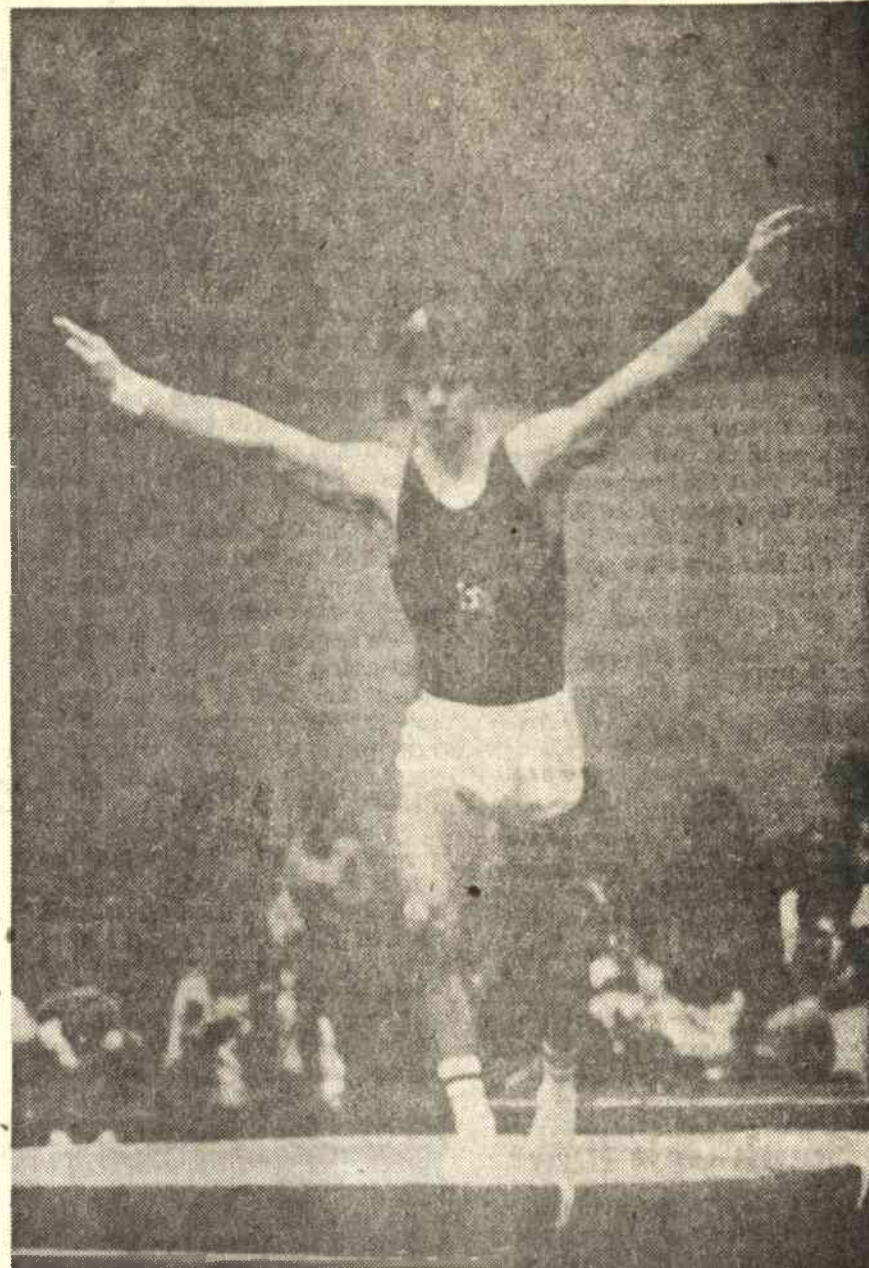
Thomas set a new meet record in the floor exercise competition with 9.75. He tied the mark in parallel bars and horizontal bars.

"Lately, I've been scoring lower in the vaulting," said Thomas.



SETTING NEW STANDARDS — Kurt Thomas of Indiana State flips during floor exercise in the American Cup gymnastics competition in New York on Sunday. Thomas set a new meet record with his score in the floor exercise and won his second straight men's championship in the meet, winning four of the six events. AP

S APR 8 1979

REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE*Kurt hits it ...**... twists it ...**... and sticks it*

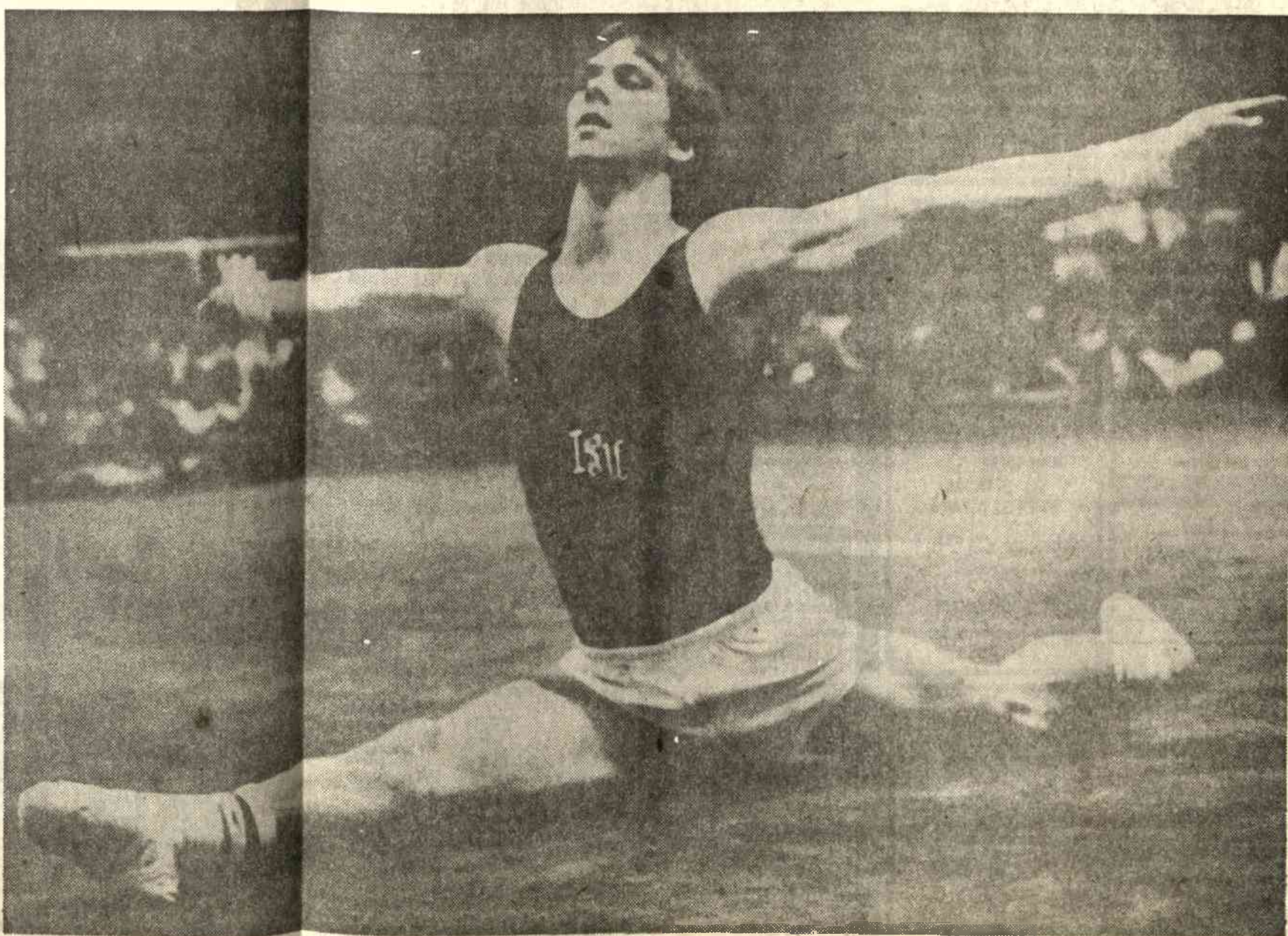
FLIPPING

From his first meet at Indiana State more than four years ago, Kurt Thomas made it apparent he was not destined for mediocrity. Nicknamed "The Kid" by his teammates for his boyish looks, Thomas broke the school's all-around record in his first meet and began his own incredible record of success.

His fame is worldwide. In France, the superstar of American gymnastics won his country's first gold medal in World Games competition in almost half a century. His reign has included the American Cup, Pan American Games, Mardi Gras Invitational, NCAA All-Around championship and invitational meets in Rumania, Spain, England and Japan.

One goal remains. A member of the 1976 Olympic team, Thomas was denied a medal of any kind. His objectives for the 1980 Olympics are clear: to come home from Moscow, not only with a medal, but with a gold medal, confirming him as the best gymnast in the history of the United States.

Star Photos by Bob Kadel

*Perfect form on pipe**Executing the Thomas Flair**Providing team leadership**Indiana State's best, America's best ... and maybe the world's best*

North Beaten At Bloomington

D—Kevin King (BS) 18:3, Tony Campbell (THN), Phillip Hatfield (THN)
 SP—Kevin King (BS) 57:8, Tony Campbell (THN), Doug McCoy (BS)
 1—David Redmond (BS) 4:2, Eddie Redmond (THN)
 PV—David Volf (BS) 15:0, Mike Rout (BS), Chris Colbert (THN)
 2—David Redmond (THN) 22:1, David Volf (BS), Doug Shurtle (BS)
 3—Mike Richmond (BS) 15:5, Jeff Fagan (BS), Eddie Redmond (THN)
 4—David Vaughan (THN) 10:1, Andy Moulden (BS), Butch Harris (BS)
 5—Mike—Paul Vandersten (BS) 4:37, Tim De-
 Bacco (THN)
 6—Riley—Bloomington South 1:35.8
 446—Greg Carlson (BS) 52:4, Steve Powers (THN), Doug Shurtle (BS)
 447—Dwight Schaefer (BS) 40:4, Ralph Patterson (THN), Jeff Fagan (BS)
 448—Dwight Schaefer (BS) 40:4, Ralph Patterson (THN), Jeff Fagan (BS)
 449—Tim DeBacco (THN) 2:08.0, Brett Watts (BS)
 228—Butch Harris (BS) 23:6, Joe Vaughn (THN), Andy Moulden (BS)
 229—Mike Richmond (THN) 10:02, Brett Ridgway (THN), Tom Woodley (BS)
 230—Mike Riley—Bloomington South 3:40.6

80 M—Dodd (THS) 14:1, Payne (B), Burns (THS)
100—Thomas (THS) 12:4, Case (B), Barr (B)
SP—Glasgow (THS) 34-1/2, Thompson (B), Mc-
Cune—Rhinefort (THS) 5:50.7, Link (B), Stout (B)
880 Relay—Brazil 2:01.9
440—Hicks (B) 1:02.8, Rhinehart (THS), Huff-
man (THS)
440 Relay—Brazil 55.1
880—Downey (B) 2:40.0, Burns (THS), Willaber
(B)
LJ—Allen (THS) 15-3, Barr (B), Hicks (B)
220—Barr (B) 28.9, Thomas (THS), West (B)
NJ—Case (B) 41.1, Prichard (B), West (B)
MD—Medley (B) 29.0
ST—Prichard (B) 20:3, Glasgow (THS), Case (B)

The legal book puts Kansas City at 15-1, Houston at 20-1, Denver and Portland at 25-1, New Jersey and Atlanta at 40-1 and San Diego at 50-1 in the championship race.

Other ISU opponents involved in post-season play are Detroit, Lamar, USC, South Alabama, Syracuse and Northeast Louisiana.

Illinois State opens its season at USC Nov. 30 and also will participate in the Fighting Illini tournament at Champaign Dec.

GREENSBORO, N.C. (AP) — Fourteen foreign players, who form a decided threat, spice the strongest field assembled in a decade for the \$250,000 Greater Greensboro Open Golf Tournament.

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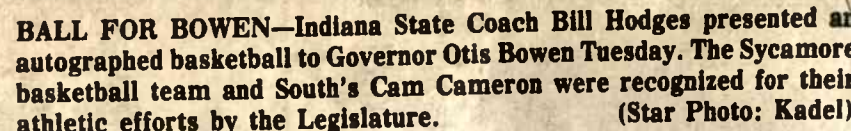
Of course, the Cubs haven't won a pennant since 1945. But they have improved on paper and could come up with a formidable pitching staff. Rick Reuschel, a 20-game winner in 1977 who slipped to 14-15 last season when he was beset by injuries, will pitch

Another newcomer for the Mets is Richie Hebner, who will be stationed at third base. Hebner was acquired

CLEVELAND (95)—Mitchell 2 1-2 5, Lambert 2 0-0 4, Chones 4 3-4 11, Walker 4 1-2 9, Carr 9 67 24, E. Smith 4 0-0 8, H. Davis 6 0-0 12, Lee 2 6-6 10, B. Smith 3 2-2 8, Higgs 2 0-0 4. Totals 38 19 23 95.

INDIANA (102)—English 4 1-1 9, Bentom 5 9-12 19, Edwards 3 0-0 6, Sobers 4 4-5 12, J. Davis 2 8-8 19, Elmore 6 2-4 14, Calhoun 3 1-2 7, Knight 4 11-13 29, Green 0 2-2 2, Radford 0 0-0 0, B. Davis 1 0-0 2. Totals 32 38-46 102.

AKRON, Ohio (AP) — Former major league baseball player Harry "Suitcase" Simpson is dead of a heart attack at the age of 53. He died Tuesday night at his Akron home.



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DePaul Lands Blue Chipper

CHICAGO (AP) — All-State center Terry Cummings says he will attend DePaul University in the fall, giving the Blue Demons their second outstanding basketball recruit in as many days.

Tuesday, All-State Teddy Grubbs, a 6-8 forward from Chicago King, said he would attend DePaul. The Blue Demons are still in the chase for one of the best high school guards in the nation, Isiah Thomas of Westchester St. Joseph. He reportedly is considering Indiana and DePaul.

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Individual championship goes to Indiana State's Kurt Thomas

BATON, ROUGE, La. — Smooth, calm Kurt Thomas of Indiana State captured the individual crown in the NCAA's national gymnastics tournament with the Sycamores, Oklahoma and Nebraska after the team title today.

Thomas, despite a sub-par performance in the event that is usually one of his best, scored a 57.70 in Friday night's competition in optional events to take the individual crown.

He finished just .75 ahead of Bart Conner of Oklahoma, who held the lead through the early events of Thursday night's competition in compulsory events.

Thomas' two-night total was 115.25 to 114.50 for Conner, who scored 57.35 on Friday night.

Jimmy Hartung of Nebraska was third with a two-night total of 114.15 after Friday night's score of 57.20.

The competition between Conner and Thomas came down to the final event, with Thomas holding a .75 lead.

Conner sped through his floor exercise and pulled down a 9.4. In the meantime, Thomas had mounted the pommel horse, usually an event he masters. The two performed much of their routines simultaneously only a few feet apart.

Twice Thomas ran into trouble, catching his leg on the pommel on one of the occasions. But he pulled a 9.4, the same score Conner had made on his floor exercises.

Thomas said he's looking to the future. "I'm young, and I've got as lot of time in front of me," he said.

"I'm looking forward to the 1980 Olympics. As a matter of fact, I want to compete in the next two Olympics. That's my ultimate goal.

"I was in the 1976 Olympics, and I realize I've got a great situation at Oklahoma. I plan to compete in gymnastics for the next ten years, and even after I get out of school, I plan to stay at Oklahoma to train."

Among the top three teams, Oklahoma had a two-night total of 446.15; Nebraska had 446.00, and Indiana State 437.65.

Oregon finished in fourth place — out of contention — with a total of 436.80.

After this afternoon's team championship competition, Conner, Thomas and Jim Hartung of Nebraska, who finished third in the all-around competition with a total of 114.15, will lead a field competing for titles in

eight individual events.

Conner, 21, said he has no regrets after Friday night's competition. "I kept that first place in my mind all night," Conner said. "When I look back on it, I think we both did a good job.

"I spent the whole night challenging Thomas, and being challenged from behind by Hartung. I knew it would come down to this. I just had a feeling."

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Community Affairs File

Kurt Thomas was superb in his last Sycamore appearance

Sp APR 14 1979

By Mike McCormick

There was silence as the crowd watched the artist do his work.

With the touch of Rembrandt and the flair of Michelangelo, he meticulously went through the motions.

When he completed, thousands stood to applaud him. There were lumps in the throats of many and a prickly sensation on the back of their necks.

They had just seen "the best" in action. But, more than that, they had seen him in his final collegiate performance.

Kurt Thomas, the 5-5, 126-pound Indiana State senior, saluted. And he smiled. It was a Kurt Thomas smile that had captured the imagination of the gymnastic public around the world.

It was his final smile in an Indiana State uniform. There, last Saturday, in Baton Rouge, La., Thomas said his collegiate farewell to his coach, Roger Council, his teammates, who he led to a third place finish in the 42nd NCAA gymnastics championships, and to the fans who have followed him since he first received All-America honors in 1975, many of whom were first attracted to the sport by watching him perform.

"It was sad," Kurt said Sunday upon his return to Terre Haute. "I'm going to miss the school, my teammates and Coach Council. I owe an awful lot to him. He has done everything for me. I don't think I could have come anywhere close to accomplishing what I have accomplished without him."

Thomas has accomplished plenty in the past five years, one of which he spent on the sidelines as a redshirt while he caught up on his credit hours and concentrated on international competition:

1975: All-America as a freshman in the parallel bars;

Member of the United States Pan American Games squad.

1976: All-America as a sophomore in the all-around and the vault;

Member of the United States Olympic team.

1977: NCAA champion in the all-around and parallel bars;

All-America as a junior in the all-around, parallel bars, pommel horse, floor exercise and high bar; Leader of Indiana State's 1977 NCAA championship team;

Leader of the United States team at the World University Games;

Winner of the all-around championship in the American Cup;

Winner of the all-around championship in the United States Gymnastics Federation (USGF) competition;

Winner of the all-around championship at the Romanian Invitational.

1978: Sixth in the all-around competition

at the World Games, the highest all-around finish ever for an American gymnast;

Gold medal in the floor exercise at the World Games, the first such accomplishment by a United States gymnast since 1932;

Winner of the all-around title in the American Cup;

Winner of the all-around title in the USGF championship;

Winner of the all-around title at the Romanian Invitational;

Winner of the all-around championship in the Champions All competition in London.

1979: Winner of the all-around competition in the American Cup;

Winner of the all-around title in the Mardi Gras Invitational;

Established or tied records in the floor exercise, parallel bars and high bar in the American Cup meet;

NCAA champion in the all-around, high bar and parallel bars;

All-America as a senior in the all-around, parallel bars, high bar, rings, side horse and vault;

Winner of the Nissen Award as the top senior gymnast in the country;

Third place finisher in the Sullivan Award competition as the top amateur athlete in the country.

And those are just a few highlights. Five NCAA titles; thirteen times an All-American. Never has an Indiana State athlete been so decorated. Rarely, if ever, has any athlete received so many All-America honors.

Indiana State's performance on the final day of NCAA competition was superb but Nebraska and Oklahoma had built up such a substantial lead during the compulsory events that it took more than a Herculean effort to overcome them. When the final scores were tabulated, the Cornhuskers scored 225.275 points, Oklahoma 223.550 and ISU 222.475.

Third place. Perhaps a bit disappointing to Council and Thomas but a proud moment for Indiana State, which received its second NCAA team trophy in less than two weeks.

In addition to Thomas' victories, ISU's Rick Charshafian, a senior from Gardena, Cal. and former California junior college champion in the rings, finished in fifth spot in his specialty to receive All-America recognition. The first six finishers in each NCAA event are designated "All-Americans."

Since Council established the sport on the Terre Haute campus in 1963, he has produced 43 All-Americans and 12 national champions. He has taken the school to the NCAA Finals six times, winning the 1977 title and finishing third twice. With a record like that, there is little wonder why he has again been selected to coach the United States' World Games squad this summer and the U.S. Olympic team in the 1980 Moscow Games.



Photo by American Visuals

Thomas, Charshafian and seniors Gary Bernloehr and Dick Dyke from Indianapolis and Ernie Schroeder from Colorado Springs graduate. But with Don Osborn, Rich Apolinar, Ted McVey, Rick Archer and several other key Sycamores returning, do not be surprised if ISU is back in the thick of things again next season. It will be tough. National champion Nebraska has a young team led by freshman Jim Hartung and is counting upon the talent of prep star Phil Cahoy.

Thomas, Hartung, Cahoy, Nebraska's Larry Gerard and Oklahoma's Bart Connor and Mike Wilson are expected to be the top candidates for the U.S. in international competition for the next two years. Osborn, who finished tenth in the all-around, is considered a possibility.

ISU Arena will not be empty next season, Kurt, while you are at Arizona State preparing for new world conquests. Coach Council will continue to produce great athletes to entertain us. But without your artistry, your smile, and your flair, it won't be quite the same.

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Thomas, Kurt

Biography

Thomas to miss USGF action

TO MAY 13 1979

By TOM RECK

Tribune-Star Sports Editor

There'll be a new U. S. Gymnastics Federation champ crowned this week in Dayton as around 50 of the top men in the country vie for the all around title.

Kurt Thomas, who has completed his work for a degree in health and safety at Indiana State, has won the past two years but won't be in the field this week. Tendinitis in his wrist has bothered him and he has been taking medication for it recently, forcing him to miss the meet.

As it is, Mike Booth, graduate, and

Don Osborn, who'll be a senior and team leader along with Rich Apolinar next season, are qualified for the meet. Compulsories are on the agenda Thursday, optionals Friday and individual finals Saturday.

Coach Roger Council will be interested in what his two men are doing along with some of the others since the top 14 finishers will advance to the final trials for the World Games. He's the U. S. coach for the Games and other action leading up to the Olympics.

"I think Jim Hartung has a good

shot at winning with Kurt out," said Council this week as he finished grading tests and made preparations for a camp at Rose-Hulman this summer. Hartung is a freshman at Nebraska and "is about due" to beat Oklahoma's Bart Conner, Council feels.

Conner and Hartung were behind Thomas in the NCAA all around totals last month and all three were on the World Games team coached by Council last fall along with Peter Kormann (Southern Connecticut grad), Phil Cahoy (who'll be a freshman at Nebraska) and Mike Wilson of Oklahoma.

Mario McCutcheon of Southern Connecticut, Larry Gerard of Nebraska and Tim LeFleur of Minnesota are other aces who figure to finish high in Ohio.

While Thomas won't be in the meet, he still has been working out along with Booth and Osborn at the ISU Arena on a tapered basis. He was told by a doctor to ease up some. Council says he should be okayed to go to the final trials without any problems. Those trials probably will be in August.

The World Games will be in Fort Worth starting Dec. 2 at the Tarrant County Convention Center. "It's a

great facility," says the Sycamore coach.

Also on the agenda this year are the Pan-Am Games in Puerto Rico in July and World University Games in Mexico City in September. Ken Allen of Wisconsin-Oshkosh will coach the team going to Mexico.

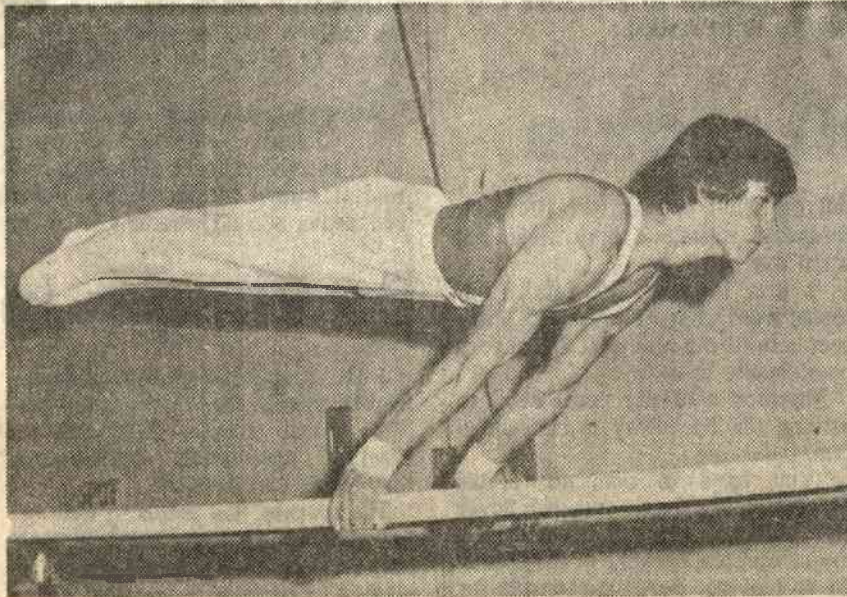
Whether the U. S. has a team in the Pan-Am Games has not been decided.

"The federation voted not to send a team because new compulsories were going to be used, favoring the Cubans, but the Olympic Committee has been putting pressure on to send some gymnasts," Council said.

Thomas, meanwhile, will be going to the World Cup in Japan, where he is a real favorite of the fans, and to the China Invitational in August. He then will head for Arizona. He says he may do student teaching there and that would give him teaching certification in his major at ISU.

He and Council also will be part of the delegation at the second Sports Festival in Colorado July 10-August 1. Thomas also will be working with his coach at the camp scheduled June 10-23. (Council has applications for this camp.)

So, it remains a busy time for the Olympic coach and his number one prospect in the world of gymnastics.



KURT THOMAS — Sidelined For USGF

Community Affairs File

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Kurt Thomas

6- MAY 12 1979

ISU's gymnast extraordinaire is heading for Moscow

(Editor's note: When he was 14 years old, Floridian Kurt Thomas happened to catch a local gymnast team in practice, thought it was "neat," and proceeded to set his mind and body in gear. Eight years later, the 22-year-old Thomas is the U.S. Olympic gymnastic team's great hope for the 1980 summer games in Moscow and, if his past performances are any indication of future promises, Thomas should vault into our hero-worshipping consciousness with the same intensity as did past superstars Olga Korbut and Nadia Comaneci. Author Grace Lichtenstein, speaking with Thomas at Indiana State University, where he is about to graduate, reports on the "Baryshnikov of men's gymnastics," as he prepares for the biggest challenge by his career.)

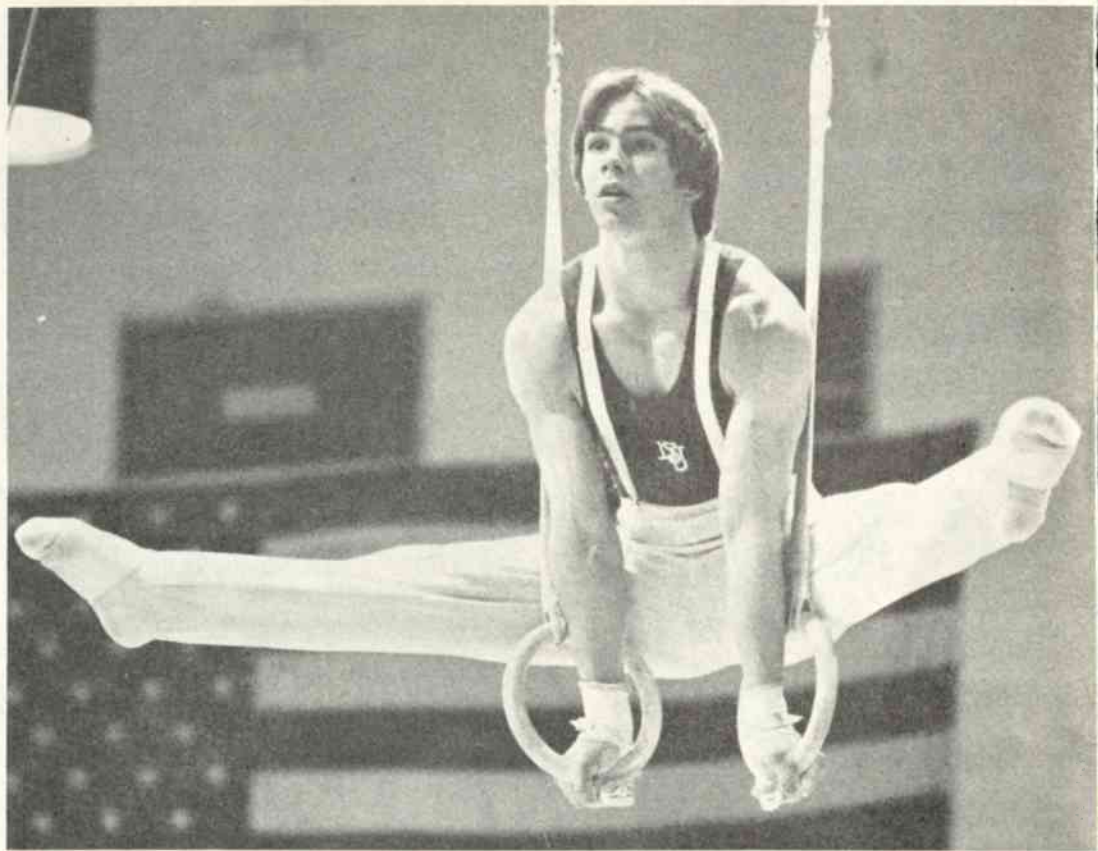
By Grace Lichtenstein

When you're a shrimp of a kid growing up in a tough section of central Miami, you either learn to run fast, get beat up a lot, or become very agile. At least, that's part of a story Kurt Thomas tells when he's asked what motivated him toward becoming a world-class gymnast.

His mother, Ellie, tells it a little differently. He started out with agility, and the local school was tough, not the neighborhood. "We were watching some home movies made of Kurt when he was about 7 years old," she said recently. "They showed Kurt on his head, Kurt on his hands, and when the kids played circus, he was the tumbler. He could stand up when he was 5 1/2 months old and walk at 7 months!"

Maybe it doesn't count whether Kurt Thomas was born to be the greatest male gymnast the United States has yet produced, or whether his lack of height propelled him into a sport where smallness became an advantage. What counts is that he's the man the United States Olympic gymnastic team is pinning its hopes on for the 1980 summer games in Moscow. And before then, he will be competing in several national and international competitions: most immediately, the U.S. Gymnastics Federation's championship meet May 17 to 19 in Dayton, Ohio, and, in June, the World Cup in Japan.

Maybe even more important than winning medals, however, is the fact that because



ISU-Av Photo

he is so much better than almost everyone else in the world, he is redefining the sport of men's gymnastics, putting it on a par with the women's version as a crowd-pleasing act and enticing a whole crop of new, short (and other-sized) fellows onto the bars and rings. Like John Curry, the ice skater, he is taking a sport and grafting on new elements to make it an art. He is men's gymnastics' Baryshnikov and its Balanchine.

And Thomas is gymnastics' answer to "Short People." Songwriter Randy Newman's nasty ditty carries no sting after one watches the 5-foot-5-inch Thomas put every one of his 126 pounds to good use, with his legs scissoring and his biceps swelling.

Should we be surprised at the emergence of men's gymnastics once women proved it was entertaining and attention-getting? The American public, moreover, seems increasingly drawn to style in athletes, not merely strength. Although men's gymnastics is a natural in today's style-conscious, fitness-crazy culture, as a participant sport it is still in its infancy compared with female gymnastics. The United States Gymnastics Federation estimates that there are about 3,800 private gymnastics "schools" across the country. For every one that is coed, there are 10 that are for girls only. But both boys and girls are gravitating toward gymnastics in high school, where it has become increasingly popular as an intermural sport.

Now 22 years old and about to graduate from Indiana State University, Kurt Thomas is usually called the Olga Korbut or Nadia Comaneci of men's gymnastics. It's a comparison he wisely welcomes. "I'm really proud to be up there and a world-class

gymnast like they are," he said one evening in the ISU gym in Terre Haute, his left foot casually resting on a trampoline at an impossible angle close by his left ear. Nevertheless, the comparison is not entirely a fair one, since in competition men and women gymnasts perform quite dissimilar feats.

This was vividly clear recently at the American Cup games in Madison Square Garden. Women, most of whom have little of the upper-body strength that men have, do not work at all on the stationary rings (suspended 7 1/2 feet above the floor), which the men use to hoist themselves into a variety of stunning positions. Nor do women perform on the pommel horse (the leather apparatus with two handholds on top) or the horizontal bar, both of which allow for dramatic sweeping acrobatics among the men. In vaulting, the women spring over a horse set sideways, while the men vault over it lengthwise. Women work on widely spread uneven bars, men work parallel bars. The women do thrilling tricks on a narrow balancing beam, the men do not. Both perform bouncing, twisting routines on a mat (the event known as "floor exercises"), but women do it balletically to music while men do almost pure acrobatics to the sound of silence.

When Thomas began attracting attention in high school, but especially during his five years at Indiana State, coaches began changing their ideas about the ideal gymnast's build. (A reduced class load, which permitted Kurt to compete internationally, accounts for his extra year at ISU.) Big and broad used to be the norm. Now, a small stature, long arms and short legs are considered ideal, because that's the way Kurt is built.

Nobody in his circle had even heard of gymnastics when Thomas was growing up in Florida with his widowed mother (a secretary) and his younger sister, although his father, a meat company manager who died when Kurt was 7, had done some wrestling.

At age 14, when he happened to catch the Miami-Dade Junior College gymnast team in practice, "I saw this guy swinging on a high bar, and I just thought it was kind of a neat sport," he explains. Soon, he was in the hands of Don Gutzler, who was then introducing gymnastics to his high school. The coach sensed a great untrained talent, and he pushed Kurt back into the gym when he was inclined to get lazy or chase girls. By his senior year he was a speedily improving all-around performer. (Some gymnasts specialize in one or two events, while the stars, like Thomas, perform in all of the six that make up a men's meet. They are graded on each event for the best all-around combined score, as well as for victories in individual events.)

Roger Council, the affable coach at Indiana State, came to Florida to scout another man and, on a tip, went to see Thomas, too. It was not hard to persuade Kurt to come to Terre Haute. "I wasn't heavily recruited," he admits, "because I wasn't the greatest out of high school." Roger Council felt the youngster had the potential and an inclination for hard work. Thomas exceeded his expectations. For his part, Kurt found in the coach a man who gave him "inspiration," as well as a thorough grounding in the basics of the sport. Adept at picking up the compulsory routines, willing to try all kinds of innovative ones, Thomas began working toward a berth on the 1976 Olympic team. He was good enough to make it, but he did not expect to win anything, nor did he, finishing 30th out of a field of 90. Back at ISU, he aimed at 1980 -- training like a demon, six hours a day, six days a week, plus a partial workout Sundays.

The victories began to pile up, both in intercollegiate competition and last year in international meets. Among his biggest wins was a gold medal in floor exercises in the World Games in Strasbourg last fall. But it was his sixth-place overall finish there that gave him almost as big a charge. "I was sixth in the world . . . the highest a U.S. gymnast had been in a long time (46 years, to be exact)," he remembered proudly. Not bad for a shrimp who only took up the sport at 14.

This March, before a packed house and an estimated 35 million television viewers, he walked off with all-around honors at the American Cup games in Madison Square Garden for the second year in a row, despite a sore thumb that he had injured in his final collegiate home meet the week before. There was no question the audience and the cameras were there because of Thomas.

On a personal level, Thomas comes across somewhat two-dimensionally, not unusual for an athlete at this stage of his development. His world is a gymnasium, and he practices so long and so hard there's not much time left for carousing or heavy thinking. Kurt is not known as either a big practical joker or a moody loner, just as a very goal-oriented man with a great sense of team spirit despite his star status.

Beth, his wife of one year, also attends classes, holds down two jobs to supplement Kurt's \$130-a-month athletic scholarship and chauffeurs her husband in their Chevy van. They met at a sorority party. Her girlfriends told her Kurt was "a creep," so she went out with him to "put him in his place." Instead, they fell in love, a major accomplishment considering his schedule, and married on New Year's Eve, 1977, the only time Kurt could get free.

Until the semester is over, Thomas lives with Beth outside Terre Haute in their 8-foot-wide trailer. Often they exist on hamburgers at the local Bonanza to save money. Next season, he'll earn some money as an assistant coach at Arizona State University in Tempe, while joining Council frequently to fine-tune his routines for the 1980 Olympics. Kurt accepted the Arizona State offer partly because he's tired of cold weather, partly because his old high school

***'To really hit your
routine the best . . .
that's just a
super feeling . . .
it's just great to
have millions of
people watching.'***

coach will be nearby, and partly because Masauki Watanabe, a Japanese-born coach who is the U.S. Gymnastics Federation's national program director for men, is based not far away in Tucson.

Most American gymnastic experts would second the statement of one collegiate coach, who, when asked if there was anyone on the American scene to challenge Kurt, replied, "Not that I can see." Bart Connor, probably the No. 2 male, has already acknowledged Thomas' superiority, although he did nip a bit harder than usual at Kurt's heels during the National Collegiate Athletic Association's meet earlier this month.

There are reports that the Japanese and the Russians, who have gymnasts as good as Thomas, are inventing new tricks specifically because of his challenge. Kurt is noodling around with new tricks, too, but he is also working toward being more consistent, "to not take a chance on blowing," as he puts it. Sometimes, he even changes a routine as he's performing, if he thinks a new trick isn't quite ready yet. All this is bound to result in some mighty exciting duels both in international meets this year and at the Moscow Olympics in 1980.

Thomas acknowledges that he plays to the crowds as much as he does to the judges: "To really hit your routine the best you can possibly hit it, that's just a super feeling. After all the work you put in, it finally pays off. But it's just great to have millions of people watching."

The payoff was splendidly displayed one night early this spring in the Indiana State gym when Thomas made his final home collegiate appearance before a capacity crowd. On his very first run in the opening

event, floor exercises, Kurt badly sprained his thumb. But, according to teammates, he is so quick that he can correct a mistake before a judge sees it. He scored 9.7 out of a possible 10 on the floor, bad thumb and all, and won every other event but the vault to lead his team to a clean win.

What was dazzling in that intercollegiate meet was that Thomas was so immeasurably better than everyone else, he was in a different league from the others. It was like seeing Jimmy Connors when he first burst into the tennis world. The same superiority came through at the Garden in the American Cup meet, even though the competition was tougher and others scored higher on an occasional event.

He is so full of self-assurance, so dashing, so bouncy on the floor, it's hard to believe there is anyone who can come close to him. Among those he considers his equals are Nikolai Andrianov, who won four gold medals for the USSR in the Montreal 1976 Olympics; Alexander Ditiatin, the Soviets' No. 2 man -- he took a third to Kurt's first at the World Gymnastics Championships -- who excels on rings but is also solid in every other event; and Shigeru Kasamatsu, another all-around performer, who comes out of Japan's exceedingly thorough gymnastics training program -- he placed second in the world championships, with 19.575 to Kurt's 19.650 in two performances of floor exercises. (In gymnastics, scoring is basically a deductive process, beginning with a 10.0 perfect score, from which points are deducted for such things as landing improperly, exceeding the time allowance, not performing a required move and going outside the designated floor-exercise area. Championships are always decided on the basis of more than one event.)

Kurt and Beth Thomas -- whether or not they secretly want to be the next Bruce and Christie Jenner -- seem able to handle the adulation and growing pressures with a refreshing Midwestern candor. Asked how much money meant to him, Kurt barely cracks a smile. "Right now, not much, because I don't have any. Later on, I'd like to be comfortable." For the next year, he points out, his whole being will be focused on Moscow. After the Garden meet in March, where several Americans made it to the finals, Thomas said: "We'll be heard of in Moscow, you can bet on that. It's time for the world to look out for American gymnasts. We've arrived."

Whatever happens in Moscow, Thomas has already transformed men's gymnastics. "The stage is set," Roger Council says. "On TV it's getting the exposure it never had. There are good guys coming up -- a supporting cast -- and here's a charismatic leader. We've given the American kids a new hero and Kurt Thomas is it."

Thomas himself says offhandedly of his beloved sport, "It's not just for little people. We've got a guy who's 6 feet 3 inches and can do all kinds of things."

No matter. There were a lot of little people, boys and girls alike, outside the ISU gym the night of Kurt's last meet there, and they were practicing handstands all over the sidewalk.

yesterday

SP MAY 12 1979

Young Ball began first funeral home in Terre Haute

By Frances E. Hughes

Terre Haute's first funeral home was started in 1847--132 years ago--by Isaac Ball. It was located at 30 North Third Street.

Ball was only 21 years of age at the time but he had been in the business world for five years.

From a family that traced its descent from Mary Ball, the mother of George Washington, Ball was born Aug. 29, 1826, near Elizabethtown, N.J. When he was but six years of age, he was brought to Indiana by his parents.

His education was rudimentary, and when he was 16 years old he went to Cambridge City, Wayne County, to learn the trade of cabinet making with a Mr. Greer, a German by birth. As an apprentice boy there, he also gained experience in making caskets. Ball was supposed to stay there for five years but after three years, Greer moved to the country and rented a farm, continuing to run his business.

This did not work out very well for Ball so he just waited for his opportunity one day when Greer was at the farm, took his clothes and tied them in a handkerchief and with only a shilling in his pocket, started walking to Dayton, Ohio.

As he traveled on foot, he relied on his meals wholly upon the generosity of people living along the roads. In Dayton, he was not able to get work at his trade but when he did it was not to his satisfaction so he only stayed a few weeks.

From there, he walked to Hagerstown, Ind., where his parents lived. For a short while he worked there but again packed his knapsack and walked to Indiana. Here, he found work at his trade with Espy and Sloan, who were to pay him \$5 a month and his board and washing under a year's agreement.

This time, the young man stayed for the year and then remained in Indianapolis to work for J. I. Stretcher, a leading undertaker of the city. He was there until the summer of 1847, when he moved on to Lafayette to engage in cabinet making. However, he stayed there but a few months and then by way of the Erie Canal he started out in a canal boat looking for a town in which to establish his own business.

The Canal boat docked at Terre Haute one night and was to resume its journey the next morning. During the evening, Ball looked over the village, saw possibilities of a good future for Terre Haute and stayed on to establish his business here.

First, he started in making furniture, undertaking and making coffins to order according to the practice then. Finally, as his business grew, he arranged a place especially for the storing of ready-made coffins, which led him to the coffin manufacturing business.

Originally, a person was measured in length when he or she died and the casket was made in the correct size before the funeral. If Ball found a corn stalk, limb of a tree or a string or cord



Isaac Ball

with knots tied in it in the front yard, this was an order for a coffin that length. He didn't even know who left the directions but he made the casket and was contacted by the family of the deceased.

Ball established his home where the Boys Club is now and there was a big barn back of it where the ready-made coffins were stored.

For five years after coming here, Ball made the coffins to order. When he started making ready-made ones, it was a well kept secret and a lock was put on the storage building.

Later, on demand that a coffin be made when the families came to the funeral home, Ball would show several tiny models about three inches long of the coffins he made. These were kept in a glass case and evidently relieved the fears of the purchaser who refused to come in too close contact with ready-made coffins.

Bodies were not embalmed in those days. Instead they were put on ice. Ball patented a model of a Corpse Preserver he invented. Filled with cracked ice both above and below, this container could hold the corpse in good condition even in hot weather.

Models of one of these boxes and one of Ball's child-sized rosewood coffins and carved wooden pedestals on which coffins were placed at funerals in those days have been given to the Vigo County Historical Society and are on display at the Historical Museum of the Wabash Valley. The curved child's coffin has a glass insert in the lid. Persons who died of scarlet fever or any other contagious disease in those days were put in sealed caskets with glass lids.

Death struck swiftly for children at the turn of the century. Many did not live to see their fourth birthday. This coffin amidst a child's clothes and toys (displayed at the Vigo County Historical Museum) serves as a grim reminder of life -- and death -- before modern miracles of medicine. There is some question as to the function of this particular coffin from the Ball Porter Funeral Home. Some say it was for infants while others say it was used as a miniature floor sample. Note the glass in the coffin's lid.



Photo by Orth



Isaac Ball Funeral Home
331 S. 3rd St.

Thomas seeks only American title in gymnastics federation meet

May 31 1978

By CARL L. BENDER
Tribune Sports Writer

Kurt Thomas makes his first appearance of the season against his peers — if indeed he has any at his level — this weekend in the U.S. Gymnastics Federation championships in Los Angeles.

Thomas and Indiana State University teammates Don Osborn and Mike Booth are among the 30 collegiate and high-school gymnasts in the country to qualify for the USGF, and all are looking for a top-12 finish.

Coach Roger Council of Indiana State said the top 12 gymnasts in the two-day meet which has become a three-day affair will participate in a summer camp later this year in France, and the dozen get automatic berths in the finals to select the United States team for the World Games.

Thomas is the defending champion and he has the incentive to win another title to add to the international championships he has under his belt this year.

"I've won it the past two years," he said, "and it's the only American championship I can win this year. Also, it is a qualifying meet for the World Games.

"I want to win the championship more than anything else," he said.

Thomas was unable to defend his National Collegiate Athletic Association championship this spring as he sat out the collegiate season under its red-shirt rule. With him on the sidelines, the Sycamores finished fifth after sharing the 1977 title with Oklahoma.

The Sooners have two entrants in the USGF Thursday and Friday, and that holds additional incentive for Thomas, who wants to take the championship over Oklahoma's Bart Conner and Mike Wilson.

They are not his only competition for the individual title, as Omaha high-school sensation Mike Hartung is rapidly becoming a force in the sport.

Additionally, Hartung's high school teammate, Phil Cahoy, is entered.

"If I had to rank them, I'd have to say Bart Conner, Hartung and ... I don't know, but I guess I'd have to go with Wilson," Thomas said when listing his top challengers.

The Sycamores mates going to Pauley Pavilion are expected to do well, according to Council, who says Osborn is much improved and Booth could be a factor in the individual finals.

Basically an all-around meet, the competition was scheduled for Thursday and Friday nights, with the composite scores determining the top dozen gymnasts. That still holds for team selections, but Council said individual finals have been tacked onto Saturday to help the people at UCLA promote the event.

"It's a strong meet," Thomas said during one of his workouts with Osborn. "Everybody's gunning to win this one, because it's the only championship of the USA.

"And if I win this thing, I'll have to give some of the credit to Donnie. He's really got me going. He's helping me as much as I'm helping him," Thomas said.

"I really do think he can be at least the top ten ... and he could go to the top six."

"This one is important," Osborn said. "I know I'll have to go through (the routines) very well."

"I'll be very surprised if Kurt doesn't win it," Council said before packing for the flight to the West Coast. "And Donnie's working better than he ever has. He's improved rapidly and is even much stronger than he was at the NCAA in early April.

"Booth, I don't know about. He went off and got a job right away and hasn't been working out as much. But I think he will be able to get into the individual finals."

Finals is the watchword for Thomas, the top American gymnast who recently took honors at Madison Square Garden, London and Romania, but he realizes victory is needed at Los Angeles if he is to be regarded as such.

"I'm really psyched to win," he said. "The American Cup, that was probably the most important meet. But there are times I haven't felt quite so psyched."

Being the best means the others are shooting for him. Thomas will have to be at his best to stave off those challenges, and teammates Osborn and Booth will have to put on perhaps their best performances to qualify in the top 12.

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Kurt Thomas 2nd in National Festival

T AUG 1 1979

By DOUG TUCKER

AP Sports Writer

Biography

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (AP) - Word spread quickly through the gymnastics contingent, days before the competition.

Kurt Thomas, America's best gymnast, was going to finish his high bar routine Tuesday night with a triple flyaway, a trick first used by the Russians in 1974 and something Thomas had never done.

But Bart Conner, who was acknowledged as America's best before Thomas' meteoric rise, was also entered in the National Sports Festival competition. And when the men's finals were concluded before a packed audience Tuesday night, Conner had three gold medals and Thomas had one.

The two-man struggle for Festival supremacy came down to the final moment of the final event - Thomas' triple flyaway off the high bar.

Conner had performed his routine earlier and garnered a 9.8 to run his total to 19.4. Thomas, leading in the preliminaries with a 9.80, fell to his knees on the triple flyaway, marring what had been a nearly flawless routine. He finished with a 9.55, a total of 19.3 and second place.

Conner, who also edged Thomas in the parallel bars and won the vaulting, knew most gymnastic observers were looking to Thomas as America's best hope in the 1980

Olympics.

"Kurt has narrowly beaten me recently," Conner admitted. "And if you look at it that way, he is." No.1.

The floor exercise was marred by an injury to one of the Festival's top gymnasts, Ron Galimore. Galimore, son of former professional football star Willie Galimore, fell with a thud on his final flip of the floor exercise and was later reported suffering ligament damage in one knee. He was to be flown to Dallas, Texas, today to be examined.

Conner came from behind to beat Thomas in the parallel bars with a 19.50, with Thomas slipping once during his routine and falling to second at 19.30.

Thomas, a recent graduate of Indiana State and the reigning world champion in the floor exercise, won a gold medal on the pommel horse with a 19.75 score, nipping Conner's 19.40. Larry Gerard, a relative unknown from Lincoln, Neb., won the gold medal in the rings competition with a 19.30, followed by Thomas at 19.25 and Conner, 19.15.

James Hartung won the floor exercise after Galimore's bad finish with a total of 19.50, with Conner second at 19.05.

The danger of gymnastics, in light of Thomas' near accident on the triple flyaway and Galimore's ligament damage, was apparent during the competition.

"It's getting a little dangerous," Thomas admitted. "But I don't think we'll do anything we can't handle. As for the death factor, I'm not going to kill myself."

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Community Affairs File

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ALONE — Kurt Thomas, a graduate of Indiana State who now lives in Phoenix, sits alone on the floor of the U.S. Air Force Academy gymnasium Tuesday before competing in front of a packed house at the National Sports Festival.

UPI



T AUG 1 1979

GOING FOR GOLD — From jellybeans before competing to the victory stand for a gold medal and a wave to his wife, Beth, sitting in the stands Tuesday, Kurt Thomas is one of America's top

gymnasts. At the National Sports Festival in Colorado Springs, Thomas took a gold medal in the pommel horse.

UPI

Thomas, Kurt

Thomas, Conner

lead medal assault

T DEC 10 1979

Biography

By SHARON HERBAUGH
FORT WORTH, Texas (AP) — Daring performances by Kurt Thomas and Bart Conner vaulted the United States into the international winner's circle Sunday with three gold medals at the 1979 World Gymnastics Championship individual finals.

Thomas, 23, retained the gold medal he won in the floor exercise a year ago by uncorking the famed "Thomas Flair."

However, the Indiana State graduate was forced to share the gold medal with Roland Bruckner of East Germany.

Both received 9.90s for combined totals of 19.800.

Thomas, who won the silver medal in Thursday's all-around competition, also captured the horizontal bar title with his stunning half-in, half-out dismount. He earned 9.90 for a 19.775 total to edge Soviet superstars Alexandre Tkachev and Alexandre Ditiatin.

In the women's individuals, Christa Canary, 16, of Northbrook, Ill., placed highest among the American women with a fifth-place finish in the vault.

Marcia Frederick, 16, of Milford, Conn., the defending champion in the uneven bars, finished sixth. Suzy Kellems, 17, of Westminster, Calif., took seventh in the vault and national champion Leslie Pyfer, 16, of Eugene, Ore., finished eighth in the floor exercise.

The United States finished sixth in the women's competition behind the Eastern European powers.

"I had the greatest feeling (standing on the winner's platform)," Thomas said. "Our flag has been down at the bottom of the box for so long, it was great to see it up at the top where it belongs."

Thomas captured the silver medal on the pommel horse behind Hungary's Zoltan Magyar and tied for second place in the parallel bars with Tkachev.

Now, he said, he would start preparing for the 1980 Moscow Olympics where he is favored to meet Ditiatin, the new all-around world champion, in a rematch.

Bart Conner, who finished sixth in the all-around, delivered a crowd-pleasing routine on the parallel bars to win America's third gold medal. He earned 9.90 for a 19.725 total.

Conner, 21 and a University of Oklahoma senior, also won the bronze medal in the vault behind Ditiatin and Nikolai Andrianovo of the Soviet Union and placed fifth in the floor exercise.

"To see us grab all these medals is just great. We always wondered if we could do it," he said. "Now when the Russians go home they're going to be watching films of us. I know I've watched lots of films of the Russians."

Jim Hartung, 19, of Lincoln, Neb., finished eighth in the vault. The Cornhusker was ninth in the all-around.

After the United States' surprise finish at the championships, Coach Roger Council predicted:

"At the rate we're going, the United States will unseat Japan at the Olympics."

In team competition, the Soviets forced Japan to relinquish the throne it held for more than two decades. The United States finished third, higher than any American gymnastics team has ever placed.

As for the Russians, Council said: "Kurt, Bart and Jim are right up there with them. But their sixth man is closer to their first man than our sixth man is to the first man. Therein lies the problem."

Women's individual finals Sunday night concluded the championships, the first ever staged outside Europe.

Community Affairs File

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B. Thomas
HEAVY MEDAL — Kurt Thomas led the way as the United States had its greatest week ever in U.S. gymnastics history, with four individual, one team and an all-around medal at the 20th World Gymnastics Championships in Fort Worth, Texas,

last week. To celebrate, Thomas took his wife, Beth, to dinner after the individual competition Sunday. The former Indiana State University athlete uses his six medals for dinner jewelry.
UPI

Thomas, Kurt

Thomas brings down house with last dismount

Biography

DEC 10 1979

By MILT HOPWOOD

Special to The TRIBUNE

FORT WORTH, Texas — Kurt

Thomas, after already tying for a gold medal in the floor exercise with East Germany's Roland Bruckner, gave a packed house of 10,500 American partisans "something extra" to cheer about after a near flawless performance on the horizontal bar during the World Gymnastics Championships here Sunday.

The event was the last of the evening in men's individual competition, and Thomas, the United States' leading gymnast, realized he would need a near-perfect 9.9 to overtake the Soviet Union's Alexandre Tkachev in winning the bar competition.

The American fans earlier responded wildly with cheers after learning Thomas and fellow American Bart Conner had won gold medals in the floor and parallel bars, respectively. But after his climactic performance on the day's final event, the former Indiana State University great wowed fans with an incredible dismount that marked the conclusion to the best performance ever by the U.S. in these games.

When his score of 9.9 was announced, the fans went crazy, screaming and hollering, and throwing bouquets of flowers to congratulate Thomas and the men's

gymnastics team which earlier in the week proved it will be a major threat in next year's Olympic Games at Moscow.

"For so long our (U.S.) flag has been down in a box somewhere," Thomas said after his performance. "And today, for once, it was up there almost every time. We are gaining international experience and now learning to cope with all the pressure."

Thomas also garnered silver medals in the pommel horse and parallel bars, while Conner had a bronze in the vault.

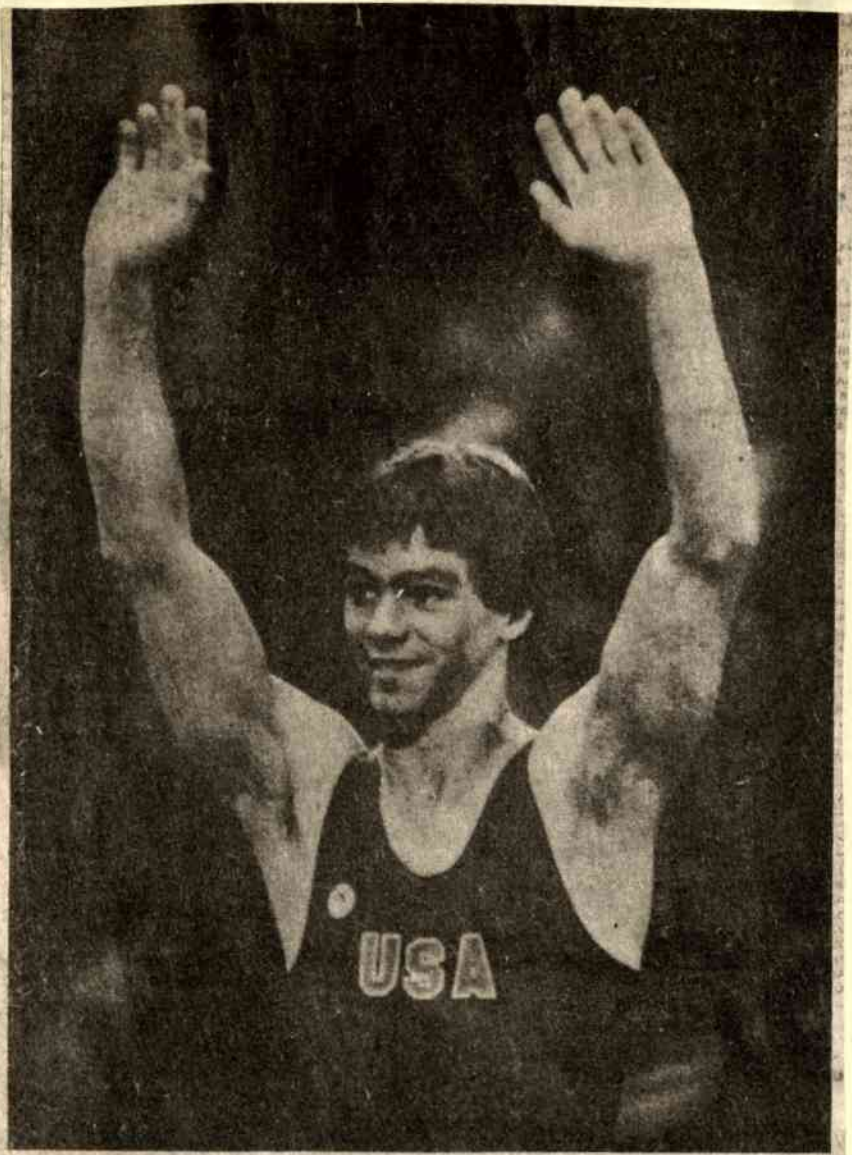
Roger Council, Indiana State and U.S. men's coach, was understandably pleased with the performance of Conner and Thomas, the latter whom he coached as a student on the Terre Haute campus during the gymnast's rise to fame.

"We made history today," Council said. "Before, the Americans were never taken seriously as a team or as individuals in international competition. But last year we took our place subtly on the scene, and the performance today will set the stage for Moscow."

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Community Affairs File

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THAT WINNING SMILE — Kurt Thomas flashes a big smile and raises his arms in triumph after winning the gold medal on horizontal bar Sunday during the 20th World Gymnastics Championships at Fort Worth, Texas.

UPI

Kurt Thomas receives

By MARTIN JASICKI
Tribune Sports Writer

INDIANAPOLIS — Kurt Thomas was the star, but talk of the 1980 summer Olympics held much of the spotlight during the 50th annual presentation of the James E. Sullivan Memorial Award Monday evening at the Convention Center.

Thomas, a native of Florida who reached fame as America's number one gymnast at Indiana State University, won the coveted amateur athletics award over high hurdler Renaldo Nehemiah, swimmer Cynthia Woodhead and seven other nominees in sports ranging from weightlifting, to wrestling, diving, boxing and the pentathlon.

Upon accepting the award, the 23-year-old gymnast noted he was honored "to be voted the top American amateur athlete" by 2,499 sports officials, past winners and members of the media comprising this year's Sullivan Award voting block.

The award has previously gone to top male and female athletes in a number of Amateur Athletic Union sports, including golfer Bobby Jones, tennis star Don Budge, basketball great Bill Bradley, swimmer Mark Spitz, and last year's winner, swimmer Tracy Caulkins.

Thomas finished third in Sullivan voting last year.

The athlete prior to the official ceremonies, apparently knew he'd receive Monday's award, as evidenced by the media attention he received, and the fact the ceremony dinner was rushed to accommodate his 8:30 p.m. chartered flight to Buffalo, N.Y., where he was to receive the Dunlop Award. Nevertheless, he expressed surprise when his name was announced by Caulkins.

"I'm really shaking," he said. "It's the greatest award I've ever received...and that includes my victories in world competition.

"There has never been a gymnast receive this award, and I feel proud to be the first. And, it's being presented in Indiana... I'm happy to be home."

Thomas said he would share the award with his mother, his wife, Beth (who was unable to attend the affair), U.S. Olympic Committee member Frank Baer, and his associates at ISU, including gymnastics coach Roger Counsil and former ISU sports information officer Ed McKee.

Sports

20 THE TRIBUNE, TERRE HAUTE

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 1980.

"I'm proud to be up here and to be an athlete," Thomas said. He added he was proud to be among the American athletes who were "able to compete not because we are forced to but because we want to compete."

While the mood was light throughout the evening, both reporters and the capacity audience who filled the Convention Center ball room (each person paying \$17.50 for a quickly served steak dinner), there was an ominous air concerning the uncertainty regarding the summer Olympic Games in Moscow. In a press conference before the dinner, the seven athletes in attendance (Woodhead and boxer Bernard Taylor were both preparing for while sprinter Evelyn Ashford was ill) agreed with 32-year-old pentathlon champ Robert Nieman in hoping that the Games be moved somewhere besides Moscow this summer.

"They couldn't have picked 10 more affected athletes," Nieman said, noting the many years of training logged by the Sullivan candidates.

"The Olympic picture doesn't look real good, and personally I'm with 20 years in sports, I'm horrified at the prospect of a possible boycott. But on a broader scope I can see where it's okay. Something has to be done to get the idea across that the Russians can't go forcing their way into other countries."

Nieman's views were shared by the other nominees, including a wearied Thomas, who was reluctant to talk about the issue that has haunted him for weeks.

Instead, he focused on the development of the sport of gymnastics worldwide and in this country.

"It pleases me that I have become a big part of what is going on with the

popularity of the sport here. Other members of our team have just as big a part because as a team we have been so successful.

"The exposure of the media to gymnastics has done a tremendous job for the sport," Thomas added. "From what I've heard, gymnastics now rates second as the most popular sport on television behind race driving."

Meanwhile, this week has been a good one for the local ISU campus, as the school's two most recognized athletic alums earned attention.

Thomas, in addition to winning the Sullivan Award Monday, appeared on ABC-television's "Superstars" program, while his former classmate, Larry Bird was a significant factor in the National Basketball Association all-star game played in Landover, Md., and telecast by CBS-TV Sunday.

The voting for the 50th Sullivan Award, as tabulated by the accounting firm of Peat, Marwick, Mitchell and Co., was as follows: Thomas, 2,696 total points; Renaldo Nehemiah, 1,959, and Woodhead, 1,160.

Other nominees included weightlifters Mike Bridges and Mark Cameron, wrestler Lee Kemp, diver Greg Louganis, Nieman, Taylor, and Ashford.

Television sportscaster Chris Schenkel was master of ceremonies for the event. Prior to the ceremonies, he noted, the Sullivan Award was established in memory of past AAU president James E. Sullivan. "It is a trophy awarded annually to the outstanding amateur athlete, not only for athletic accomplishments but also for how well he exemplifies the amateur creed."

greatest award



Two big awards for Kurt...

Kurt Thomas, right, world gymnastics gold medalist, and Willie Stargell, Pittsburgh Pirates first baseman, 1979 World Series Most Valuable Player and National League co-most valuable player, congratulate each other after being chosen Amateur and Professional Athletes of the Year at the eighth annual Dunlop Pro-Am awards

dinner in Buffalo, N.Y., Monday. Thomas flew to Buffalo Monday night after receiving another major honor, the Sullivan Award, earlier in the evening in Indianapolis. In the Buffalo ceremony, Thomas received a Steuben Crystal design award presented by A. Neville Procter, president of the Dunlop Tire and Rubber Corporation. AP

sports

Biography

Sp FEB 9 1980

Thomas: first gymnast to receive coveted Sullivan Award

By Mike McCormick

For three years, Indiana State's Kurt Thomas has been recognized as America's premier gymnast.

Monday, the Amateur Athletic Union recognized him as America's premier amateur athlete: the winner of the 50th James E. Sullivan Award.

It was well-deserved. Few amateur athletes in history have dominated their sport like Thomas. Thirteen times he was an All-American. Five times he won an NCAA title. Three gold medals in World Games competition. The first American to ever win a medal in the World Games' all-around competition. Winner of the Nissen Award as the top senior gymnast in the country. Winner of the Dunlap Award as Amateur Athlete of the Year.

The list goes on and on.

So, before a full house at Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis, the stage was set for Thomas to be named to follow the tradition established when golfer Bobby Jones was named the first Sullivan Award winner in 1930.

That year, Jones won his fifth National Amateur Golf championship, the British Open, the British Amateur title, the National Open and both matches in the Walker Cup competition. No one had ever dominated golf like Jones did in 1930 and the years immediate prior. Perhaps no one has since.

The AAU sought to honor Jones for his achievements. The organization named the award after its former Secretary and Commissioner, James E. Sullivan, who was credited with upholding the integrity of amateur athletics. It was Sullivan who, in spite of his great admiration and fondness for Jim Thorpe, stripped the Indian of his 1912 Olympic medals and other titles when it was learned that Thorpe had accepted fifteen dollars to play semiprofessional baseball.

The list of athletes who have succeeded Jones reads like a Sports Hall of Fame: Glenn Cunningham, Don Budge, Don Lash, Gil Dodds, Doc Blanchard, Bob Mathias, Dick Button, Fred Wilt,

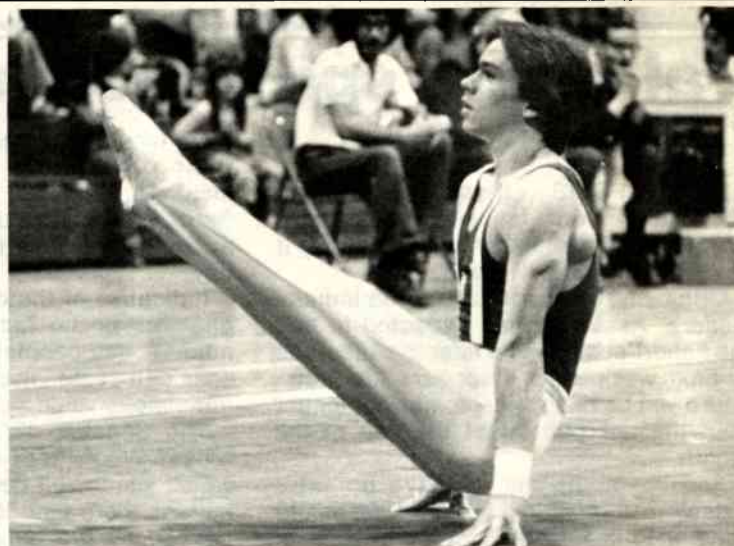


Photo Courtesy ISU A-V Center

Bob Richards, Parry O'Brien, Rafer Johnson, Wilma Rudolph, Don Schollander, Bill Bradley, Jim Ryun, Mark Spitz, Frank Shorter, Bill Walton, Bruce Jenner, John Naber and, last year, Tracy Caulkins.

But none of the prior winners were gymnasts. In his sport, Kurt stands alone.

Thomas, finished third in last year's voting. This year, he overwhelmed all opposition. Maryland's great hurdler, Renaldo Nehemiah, finished second by 737 ballots. Swimmer Cynthia Woodhead was third.

On hand for the ceremonies were many of Thomas' friends: his coach, Roger Council, former ISU sports information director Ed McKee, Athletic Director Bob King and ISU President Richard Landini.

They were among the Hoosiers to applaud another Kurt Thomas performance on the soil where he earned his fame and notoriety. May there be many more.

Kurt Thomas gets 10 in American Cup bar

T MAR 10 1980

By KILEY ARMSTRONG

NEW YORK (AP) — World champion Kurt Thomas already was a "10" in the eyes of his jubilant fans — but the judges made it official Sunday, awarding him a perfect score in what may be American gymnasts' last international competition of the year.

Thomas — his arm raised in victory by teammate Bart Conner — scored a 10 on the horizontal bar as he and 13-year old Tracee Talavera earned the most overall points to win the American Cup gymnastics championships at Madison Square Garden.

"I looked at the judges after I finished and two kind of nodded yes. I thought maybe, maybe," said the 23-year-old defending champion.

Talavera, the youngest among competitors from 15 countries, scored 9.80 on the balance beam to defeat world champion Vera Cerna, 16, of Czechoslovakia. The tiny, lithe American also scored 9.90 to tie with Emilia Eberle of Romania for the highest meet score on a floor exercise since Romania's Nadia Comaneci scored a 10 in 1978.

"Everybody usually criticizes my dance. That's not usually my best event," said Talavera. "The crowd helps to get me going."

A crowd of 13,822 watched in silent awe while Thomas did his horizontal bar routine and cheered wildly when Talavera and Thomas received their awards.

Conner, 21, finished second in the men's overall competition, while American Marcia Frederick, 17, was third behind Romania's Emilia Eberle in the women's division.

The Soviet and Romanian athletes refused to be interviewed after the meet, saying they objected to the scoring.

Thomas, who will not compete in the 1984 Olympics but has not announced retirement plans, said earlier the East Germans and Russians "did not have their best guys here. It detracts from the competition but it's still a good field."

"It's always on my mind whether we're going to go" to the Moscow Summer Games, he said.

Talavera, who conceded she is young enough to compete in the 1984 Summer Olympics if the

Americans don't participate this year, said she still wants to try out for the 1980 team.

"Even if we're not going, making the Olympic team is still a big honor," she said.

Thomas' horizontal bar performance received three 10s and a 9 from the judges, with the lowest score deleted. Spokesmen for the U.S. Gymnastics Federation said they thought it was the only 10 ever awarded in horizontal bar competition.

His performance overshadowed the 9.90 score won by both Conner and Bulgaria's Stojan Deltchev on the horizontal bar.

Conner also tied with Thomas for first place on the rings with a score of 9.70.

Thomas led the floor exercise with a 9.70, the pommel horse with a meet record of 9.90 and the parallel bars with a 9.90, surpassing the 9.80 won by Conner, who is world champion in that event.

Conner and Igor Verniy of the USSR won the vault, each scoring 9.70.

Talavera led on the uneven bars with a 9.85 and the balance beam with a 9.80, while Dimitria Turner of Romania won the vault with a 9.75.

Conner received 58.40 points for second place in the men's division, followed by Bulgaria's Stojan Deltchev with 54.45.

Talavera led the women with 39.10, followed by Eberle with 39.00 and Frederick with 38.80.

"Tracee felt confident. It's the best she's done on her floor exercise," said Coach Linda Metheny Mulvihill of Eugene, Ore.

Other competitors who had advanced to Sunday's competition were Verniy with 57.4 overall points; Zoltan Magyar of Hungary, 57.35; Alexander Yevseev of the Soviet Union, 56.75; Michel Boutard of France, 56.65, and Henri Boerio of France, 55.90.

Finishing behind Talavera, Eberle and Frederick were Turner with 38.75 points; Cerna, 38.35; Franka Volght of East Germany, 38.15; Anita Sauerova of Czechoslovakia, 37.80 and Erika Flanders of Hungary, 37.05.

A possible 40 points could be scored in the four women's events and 60 points in the six men's events.

Sumac is an important natural food for deer in Indiana.

Wigo County Public Library

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Community Affairs File

THOMAS, KURT

Sport Will Be *Biography* Hurt: Thomas

S APR 4 1980

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — World champion gymnast Kurt Thomas said Thursday that a United States boycott of the Olympics would deal a setback to gymnastics in this country that would be felt for years.

However, Thomas said that if President Carter stands firm in his decision to keep the nation out of the Summer Games in Moscow, the United States should not send a team, even though he and hundreds of other athletes would be disappointed.

"The boycott will not only affect our athletes, but it will affect our country for 10 or 20 years," said Thomas, who stands an excellent chance of winning a gold medal if the United States competes in the Olympics. "It's really going to hurt our sport."

"If anything, athletics should bring countries together," he added. "What we're doing now is pushing countries apart. It's (a boycott) going to hurt the Olympics for a long time."

Thomas, assistant coach at Arizona State, made his remarks at a news conference prior to the start of the 38th NCAA Championships at the University of Nebraska.

The former Indiana State University standout was the all-around champion at last year's NCAA meet. He also has won three world titles and was named America's top amateur athlete for 1979.

"This is my last shot," said Thomas, 24. "My era of gymnastics is peaking. I'm at the top of my competition. I'm definitely going to feel disappointed if we don't go."

"But I'm a little unique in what I've done. I've traveled all over the world and I've done just about everything you could do in gymnastics except go to the Olympics and win a medal. I'd still like to do that, but at least I've had an opportunity to do some other things."

If the United States does not send a team to Moscow, or at least a gymnastics representative, Thomas said Americans would be left out of important decisions made by the Federation of International Gymnastics.

In addition, he said Americans such as Frank Bare, vice president of the Federation, would lose their positions.



ON SIDELINES — Kurt Thomas was the star of last year's NCAA Gymnastics Championships when the Indiana State ace took the all around and two other titles. This year, he's with the Arizona State as an assistant coach.

"We're going to lose a lot of those people and that would really hurt," Thomas said.

Although he wants to compete, Thomas said he would abide by Carter's directive to stay home if that was the final decision.

"If your country does not want you to go, I don't think you should go," he said. "The president is saying you shouldn't go. If you do go, you're defeating his purpose."

Thomas said he would continue to train for the Olympic Trials, still scheduled for late May in Jacksonville, Fla., hoping all the while that Carter will change his mind.

He also said he believes America's success in the Winter Olympics has shifted public opinion in favor of competing in Moscow.

"I've seen a change. I think our overall success at Lake Placid triggered it," he said. "I want to go. I want to get my chance. I hope this will influence the president."



PERFECT PERFORMANCE — World champion Kurt Thomas goes through his horizontal bar routine at Madison Square Garden en route to scoring a perfect

10 on the apparatus Sunday afternoon. He won the event, and took his third consecutive American Cup in the process.

AP

Kurt Thomas Keeping Busy



Ramblin' Reck

By Tom Reck
Star Sports Editor

He wasn't in the same attire folks in the Indiana State Arena had become accustomed to seeing him Wednesday but his face was familiar nonetheless in the gymnastics room.

Yes, Kurt Thomas — the most decorated and well-known U. S. athlete in his sport — stopped by the facility on his way to Carbondale, Ill. He was taking his mother, who works at Southern Illinois, a new car.

"I felt funny with my nice car knowing my mom needed one and my father-in-law found one for me," said The Kid, who now is an assistant coach and works out at Arizona State, among other things. Thomas' wife Beth is from Rushville.

Last weekend, he put on an exhibition in New York. On hand with him was Rich Apolinar, who has been helping Chuck Duncan coach the Sycamore team. He was a senior all-arounder last season.

Kurt had his first book published this past summer, co-authored by Kent Hannon, and he says it is going into second printing soon. This book pretty much chronicles his gymnastics career. At the same time, the two are preparing a second one which will be more technical, on an instructional level.

Last year's AAU Sullivan Award winner retired from competition last winter after it was known the U. S.

would boycott the Olympic Games. He is just as busy or busier now as when he was competing on an international basis.

—For one, he is employed as a commentator by ABC. ("I'll be on three shows in January.")

—He is working for AMF, a gymnastics firm.

—He is "up to 140 pounds" compared to 126 when he competed. (It wasn't like you could tell it.)

—He recently signed a commercial deal to endorse Soloflex.

—Lorimar Productions possibly will make a movie of his career. ("I won't play myself. We talked about it but it would be a little difficult for me to say 'Here I am. . . I'm great'.")

—If financing is secured, he will play Burt Lancaster's son in a remake of the movie *The Crimson Pirate*.

He sees former ISU Coach Roger Counsil at meets in his role as director of the U. S. Gymnastics Federation.

Internationally, he feels it will take the U. S. some time to come back in gymnastics from the boycott. "We have lost our exposure and some of our guys didn't do so well and have

been hurt," he commented.

Frank Bare, too, no longer has his international position and Thomas feels that will hurt the U. S. Bare is the man Counsil succeeded in the USGF.

One of his rivals, Bart Conner of Oklahoma, is competing again after being sidelined. In the NCAA ranks, he says Nebraska, without a doubt, is the team to beat again.

The Kid was back — unspoiled by the "fame and fortune" he so richly deserves.

SIDELINERS — In case you had not noticed, the Missouri Valley Conference is off to a 29-11 start in basketball counting Illinois State's games which also accounts for one defeat, that two-pointer the Redbirds lost to Bradley.

Bradley, meanwhile, has won 20 in a row at home. ISU will be there to open the conference season in January.

In football, the Valley finished with an 18-17 log against non-league foes, the first winner outside the Valley since 1967. Attendance was up an average of 700 per game in spite of some poor crowds late in the season.



KURT THOMAS
Gymnast Keeping Busy

MISSOURI VALLEY CONFERENCE

	W-L	Pct.
Tulsa	5-0	1.000
Wichita	5-0	1.000
Creighton	5-0	1.000
Bradley	3-0	1.000
West Texas	3-1	.750
Illinois State	3-1	.750
Drake	2-1	.667
Southern Illinois	3-2	.600
New Mexico State	1-3	.250
Indiana State	0-4	.000

Tuesday's Games

Auburn-Montgomery 59, ISU 58 at
Bradley 85, Chicago State 61

Wednesday's Games

Creighton 82, Loyola (Chicago) 74
Evansville 65, S. Illinois 60

Thursday's Games

Knox at Drake
Texas-El Paso at New Mexico St.
West Texas at Pan American

Friday's Games

Creighton at Iowa State
Syracuse at Illinois State
Tulsa in Oil Capital Classic

Saturday's Games

ISU at Ball State, 3 p. m.
Illinois Wesleyan at Bradley
Iowa at Drake
New Mexico St. at Texas-El Paso
Northern Illinois at SIU
Oil Capital Classic
Cameron at West Texas
NE Louisiana at Wichita

INDIANA PREP BASKETBALL

Anderson Highland 107, Anderson 106
Harding 78, Elmhurst 51
Anderson Madison Hts. 68, Kokomo Haworth 58

Thomas, Kurt

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Community Affairs File

S JAN 7 1982

Kurt Thomas Returns To Competition

CHAMPAIGN, Ill. — Kurt Thomas, one of the greatest gymnasts in United States history and a former collegiate standout at Indiana State University, will be the headline attraction in the inaugural United State Professional Gymnastics Classic at 8 p.m. Monday, Feb. 1, at the Assembly Hall at the University of Illinois.

The 44-performance, 42-city tour offers \$250,000 in prize money for the first professional competition in gymnastics history.

Tickets are on sale at Assembly Hall and the Illini Union ticket office and by mail. Telephone orders are accepted with major credit cards. Call 217-333-5000 for ticket information.

The 25-year-old Thomas led the ISU Sycamores to the 1977 NCAA co-championship.

Thomas became the first American in 46 years to win a gold medal at the World Championships when he captured the floor exercise title in 1978 at Strasbourg, France.

The following year at Ft. Worth, Texas, Thomas won two more world titles ... successfully defending his floor exercise crown and winning the horizontal bar. In addition, he was the all-around silver medalist and earned silvers in two other individual events while leading the United States men to a best-ever team bronze medal.

Thomas was the 1979 recipient of the Sullivan Award as the country's amateur athlete-of-the-year.

A native of Hollywood, Fla., Thomas returned to his home state to open the Gymnastics Classic, which started a three-month schedule in Miami at the Orange Bowl Festival, Dec. 30. The event marked the return to individual competition for Thomas, who retired as an amateur when he could not compete in the 1980 Olympics due to the United States boycott.

Thomas' last individual amateur competition was the 1980 American Cup Gymnastics Championships in Madison Square Garden, where he won the all-around men's title for the third consecutive year. Thomas dominated the American Cup, setting numerous records in each of the three years he competed and capped his amateur career by scoring a perfect 10 in his final event ... the horizontal bar.

The ISU graduate is currently working as a commentator for ABC-TV Sports and as a representative for a major supplier of gymnastics equipment.

He also represents a leading sportswear firm under whose banner he promotes young men's apparel.

Thomas will be seen on NBC-TV Sportsworld Sunday.

He is now residing in Scottsdale, Ariz., with his wife, Beth. He is working on his second gymnastics book and runs a gymnastics camp, club and several clinics.



Kurt Thomas While At Indiana State

Vigo County Public Library

Thomas, Kurt

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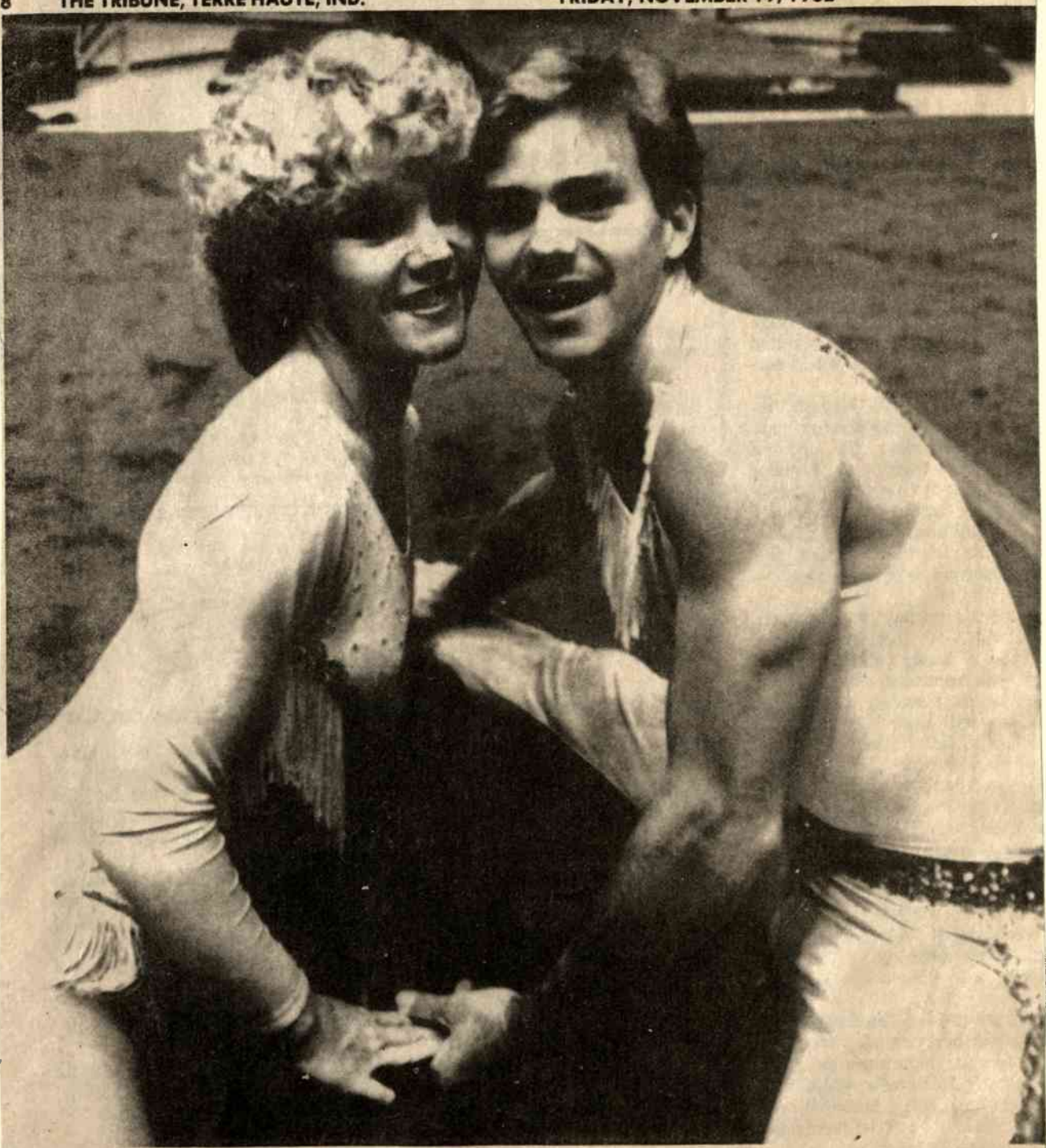
Biography - T

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FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 1982

8

THE TRIBUNE, TERRE HAUTE, IND.



LOVE ON THE MATS — Former Indiana State University gymnast and three-time world champion Kurt Thomas joins his new wife, Jeanne, on the floor of the Felt Forum in New York Thursday during a rehearsal for the United State Gym-

nastics Classic, which opens Sunday in Madison Square Garden. The couple was married in August at Lake Tahoe and they will be performing together in New York as man and wife for the first time.

AP

Vigo County Public Library

Kurt Thomas plans to make more movies

Biography - T.
T: MAY 10 1985

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. (AP) — Critics are panning the acting debut of former world champion gymnast Kurt Thomas in the new movie *Gymkata* but the ex-Olympian says he's due to star in another such film early next year.

In the movie, Thomas, an Indiana State University graduate, portrays a former Olympic gymnastics contender who is recruited by the U.S. government to break into an Asian country to play "The Game" — a violent obstacle course that no contestant ever has survived — in order to rescue his father and secure a strategic military site for his country.

The film combines the work of producer Fred Weintraub and director Robert Clouse — a partnership which produced the old Bruce Lee film *Enter the Dragon*.

Weintraub "has a real feel of how the fighting and gymnastics could be put together" Thomas said. "We came up with a new fighting form."

Thomas, 28, said he "had been asked to do some martial arts films" before and "was flattered and wanted to, but they were so off-the-wall I didn't want to do them."

The 5-foot-5, 125-pound Thomas is a three-time world champion gymnast and won the Sullivan Award in 1979 as the best amateur athlete in the U.S. He was a member of the 1976 U.S. Olympic team and coached briefly at Arizona State University after retiring from competition in 1980.

At ISU, he helped the men's gymnastics team tie for the school's only NCAA championship. He also was the all-around champ and qualified for the 1980 Olympic team that did not compete because of an American boycott.

"I've been on the stage and I've had to perform live," said Thomas, adding that acting "was an easy transition. I loved it. I'm not a Robert Redford or a Paul Newman,

but I was able to hold my own. I'm going to have develop my own style."

Although he owns a home here, Thomas spends most of his time now in San Diego, Calif., and Orlando, Fla., producing and performing in a combination gymnastics-dancing-acting show at the two Sea World complexes.

"Gymnastics is very entertaining. But you go to a meet and you end up waiting around for the judges (to reveal their scores) and it's boring," Thomas said. "With this show, we're on for 20 minutes of entertainment and people leave wanting more."

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Thomas, Kurt